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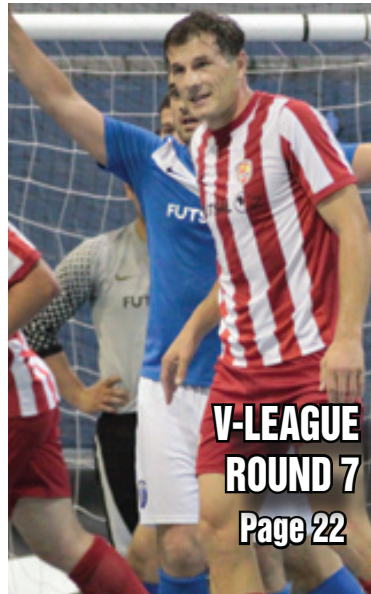
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W e e k l y

A-League Round 11 Friday 16th Dec - Sunday 18th Dec 2011

This Week's Line Up



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Galekovic set to notch up 100 for Reds

Adelaide United FC goalkeeper Eugene Galekovic is poised to become the fourth player to make 100 Hyundai A-League appearances for the club when the Reds face Gold Coast United at Hindmarsh Stadium on Friday night.

Barring any mishap between now and Friday night, Galekovic will follow Travis Dodd, Robert Cornthwaite and Lucas Pantelis as the only players to reach the milestone.

Of the Reds' current crop, only Cassio has been at the club longer, Galekovic's Adelaide United debut coming against Brisbane Roar on 2 November 2007 after he was signed mid season to replace the injured Daniel Beltrame. On his way to 100 Hyundai A-League appearances for the club, Galekovic has picked up two Hyundai A-League Goalkeeper of the Year awards, as well as being named Adelaide United Club Champion and Player's Player twice.

"It's always an achievement and it's good to be playing it this week against Gold Coast," Galekovic said.

Since arriving from Melbourne Victory, Galekovic has gone from strength to strength and scarily believes he is still yet to reach his prime.

The 30 year old has only missed six games on his way towards his 100th Hyundai A-League appearance for the club. He was rested for a period during the Reds' hectic 2008 AFC Champions League schedule, while a hand injury kept him out of three games last season.

"I think I'm at the age where in the next couple of years I'm probably coming into my peak and hopefully my form continues and helps the club out," Galekovic said.

His reputation as one of the league's best shot stoppers could easily see Galekovic as an enticing lure for overseas clubs, but on whether he was still considering a move abroad, the keeper with four games for the Qantas Socceroos to his name says he is more than content at the Reds.

"It (a move overseas) is always there if it does come up, but I've got a couple of years to go here and I'm happy here," Galekovic said. "I'm not really looking to go, I'm happy to stay in Adelaide and I love it in Adelaide so I'm not really pushing the case."

Despite the Reds being equal with Gold Coast United as the clubs to have conceded the most goals so far this season, it has not been from



Adelaide United shot-stopper Eugene Galekovic brings up the ton tonight. Photo: ADAM BUTLER

a lack of quality performances from Galekovic, who was again a standout in the Reds' 1-1 draw with Melbourne Victory.

28 clean sheets from his 99 appearances to date arguably does not do Galekovic's talent and contribution justice. While the Reds have only managed two clean sheets in the first ten games this season, Galekovic sent a clear message that the players were galvanising behind each other and particularly embattled captain Jon McKain.

"It has been tough. Results haven't helped, we're not playing the best football but we're staying united and we're backing everyone including our captain, it has been tough on him this year, but all of the payers, the coaches and the club are backing him and we want to move forward and get some

results," Galekovic stated. "I think everybody was saying we're going to be top two, top three and if you look at it on paper, individually we're very good players, it's just as a team we're probably not playing as we should. It's a shame but we've still got a long way to go and we've still got time to get there."

Friday night's game against cellar dwellers Gold Coast looms as a danger game for the Reds. The Hyundai A-League's other 'United' team were unlucky not to get three points against Sydney FC last weekend and Galekovic does not believe their position on the table reflects the football they are capable of producing.

"It's a massive game. Obviously they (Gold Coast United) are below us on the table and it's a game where we're going to be favourites and going to

need the three points to stay in touch with the top six, so we've got to work hard this week and hopefully on Friday it all turns for us," Galekovic said.

With Galekovic contracted to the club up to the end of the 2013/14 season, it is probably fair to suggest Adelaide United's last line of defence is in safe hands.

Eugene Galekovic – Hyundai A-League appearances for Adelaide United FC	
Season Appearances (clean sheets)	
2007/08	11 (1)
2008/09	22 (10)
2009/10	27 (6)
2010/11	29 (9)
2011/12	10 (2)
Hyundai A-League Total	99 (28)*
15 appearances (5 clean sheets) in HAL for Melbourne Victory	

Halloran taking a few for the team

YOUNG Gold Coast winger Ben Halloran is getting used to the rough treatment from opposition defenders and says it just makes him more determined to keep running at his markers.

The 19-year-old was the constant target for Sydney's rearguard in the 0-0 draw last Sunday, but declared his willingness to put his body on the line for the good of the team as United look to inject momentum into their season and battle for every point.

"I'm getting used it (the rough treatment) to be honest. In the youth league it doesn't happen but obviously the Hyundai A-League is a lot more physical. If I'm getting fouled and winning free-kicks for the team then I'm happy with that," Halloran said.

"It's up to us all to put in that extra ten per cent every week and put our bodies on the line if we have to. It's important to battle hard during a game to get results.

"We were fired up against Sydney and it's probably the most fired up we've been all year. I think we showed that we're prepared to put in and grind out results if we have to. If we continue to do that we will be alright for the rest of the season.

"I thought we were solid and you've always got a good chance of winning if



Ben Halloran in action for Gold Coast. Photo: ADRIAN GAGLIONE

you're solid at the back.

"We took a lot of confidence from the game on Sunday and that's important. We're taking that confidence into the match on Friday and we believe we can take the points from Adelaide."

Meanwhile, Dutch import Peter Jungschlager also underlined his commitment to the team, declaring he was happy to play in any position asked of him.

Jungschlager played at right wing-back against the sky blues, a diversion from

his more familiar position in the centre of midfield, but after helping United to keep their first clean sheet of the campaign with a solid performance he says he will do whatever it takes to secure three points in Adelaide.

"I played right-back / right-half which was a bit new to me, but I will always do my best for the team," Jungschlager said.

"Whatever position I'm asked to play I will play because I want us to start winning more games and work our way up

the table. It's the team that counts. "There's definitely a better feeling now because none of us enjoyed the run we were on, but after Sunday's game we have something to build on and it's up to us to take it from here.

"We had chances to win the game against Sydney, but it wasn't to be so now we want to make sure we win in Adelaide on Friday night.

"We've played all the other teams now so we know how Adelaide will play against us. It's taken a while but our structure is a bit better now and we will be doing everything possible to get on a winning run started on Friday night.

"The memory of what happened down there last time is still fresh for us and it's something we want to put right," he added.

As with most foreign imports, Jungschlager has been through a period of adapting to his new surroundings and getting used to the vastly different playing conditions in Australia. Naturally, one of the more difficult elements to adjust to is the summer heat, but after admitting to initially being shocked by Australian temperatures, the Dutchman is sounding more Aussie by the day!

"The games are in the evening mostly so it's not too hot then and I'm getting used to it anyway. It was very different at first, especially when summer first started, but I I like it now; it's good!" he smiled.

Mixed Mariners account for Malaysian U23's

A combination of Central Coast Mariners National Youth League and Hyundai A-League players today defeated the Malaysian U23 National Team 1-0 in a behind closed doors training match at Mingara Athletics Track, Tumby Umbi.

Captain-for-the-day Daniel McBreen's well-taken goal midway through the second half was all that separated the two sides in a match that saw numerous junior Mariners pit wits against Malaysia's Young Tigers.

Last month, Malaysia's U23 team won the South East Asian (SEA) Games, seeing off Indonesia on penalties in the final played at Jakarta's Gelora Bung Karno Stadium.

A crowd of nearly 100,000 people watched the Young Tigers claim the SEA Games gold medal that day – a gallery considerably larger than today's audience consisting of either side's coaching and support staff.

Having played and defeated Sydney FC's National Youth League 3-0 yesterday, Malaysia rotated their squad and showed good ability to match it for the most part with the Mariners at

Mingara. In particularly, talented number 9 Ahmad Fakri Saarani did well leading the line against a Central Coast backline featuring Trent Sainsbury and Sam Gallagher.

For the Mariners, Mitchell Duke impressed up front, while experienced midfielder Stuart Musialik featured in the final 15 minutes of the match.

It was a welcome return to match action for Musialik who since joining the Yellow and Navy has frustratingly had to deal with a series of unfortunate adductor and calf injuries.

Mariners Assistant Coach Phil Moss guided the side for the 90 minutes, and made numerous substitutions after the half-time break.

Indeed, youngsters Kwabena Appiah-Kubi, James Oates, Hayden Morton and Jordan Farina were each given the opportunity to impress the watching Graham Arnold, while fellow NYL players Anthony Caceres and Duke started the game.

Malaysia's U23 National Team is in Australia for another week.



Mariners attacker Daniel McBreen in action against the touring Malaysian U23 National Team.

Football comes to Bathurst

Football Federation Australia, Bathurst Regional Council and Western NSW Football announced the ticketing details for the Hyundai A-League 2011/12 season match between Adelaide United and the Newcastle Jets which will be played at Carrington Park, Bathurst on Wednesday 25 January 2012 (kick-off 7:30pm AEDT).

The match is one of five community matches to be played during the Hyundai A-League 2011/12 season and will be the first time that a Hyundai A-League match will be played in Bathurst.

Lyll Gorman, Head of A-League, is very excited about taking one of the most anticipated fixtures in the competition to Bathurst.

"When we designed the Hyundai A-League 2011/12 season draw we made a conscious decision to take football to new areas and share the competition with the football family under the banner that We Are Football," said Head of A-League Lyll Gorman.

"Western NSW has such a rich football history and culture that it made complete sense to take one of our most competitive matches to a venue such as Carrington Park in Bathurst.

"I'm sure that the local community will embrace this event and enjoy witnessing top level professional football in their own backyard.

"I would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge Bathurst Regional Council and Western NSW Football for all their support to host this match," concluded Gorman.

"Having this game played here at Carrington Park is a fantastic coup for Bathurst," said Mayor Greg Westman. "This match will give people west of the mountains an opportunity to enjoy a

top line sporting contest, close to home. Football (soccer) is a very popular sport in our region and I'm sure people across the Central West are looking forward to seeing Adelaide and Newcastle take the park in Bathurst next month."

Western NSW Football Operations Manager Andrew Fearnley believes that hosting a match like this will provide inspiration to the local football community.

"It's not often that the local football community gets the opportunity to see players of this calibre close up. "From a develop point of view, events such as these will leave an indelible mark on the minds of junior footballers in the region.

"Hopefully, in years to come, some of the young players that come to the match may even play in the Hyundai A-League themselves," concluded Fearnley.

The match will be a part of the regions Australia Day celebrations and is being hosted by Western NSW Football, with the support of Bathurst Regional Council.

There are two categories of tickets – reserved seating and general admission, with family packages are also available. Tickets are on sale at the Bathurst Memorial Entertainment Centre. They can be purchased in-person at the Box Office, over the phone (+61(0)2 6333 6161), and also online via the What's On page of the BMEC website (www.bmec.com.au/bmec/whatson).

Upcoming match details
Hyundai A-League 2011/12 Season
Adelaide United v Newcastle Jets
Carrington Park, Bathurst
Wednesday, 25 January 2012
Kick-off 7:30pm (AEDT)

A MILESTONE IN AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL

The Football Media Association (FMA) has paid tribute to the pioneers of football in Australia on the 100th anniversary of the formation of the national governing body.

Delegates representing most of the States of the 11 year old Commonwealth of Australia, as well as New Zealand, met in Sydney over three days commencing on 15 December 1911 under the banner of the Australasian Football Conference at the Sydney Sports Club in Hunter Street. It was the first ever meeting of the members of each of the associations and the key outcome was the establishment of the Commonwealth Football Association (CFA) as the national governing body for football in Australia – the forerunner to what is now known as Football Federation Australia (FFA).

The issues discussed at the 1911 conference also show that the key issues of the day haven't changed significantly in 100 years.

Historian Nick Guoth of Canberra says that other items on the agenda in 1911 included:

- promotion of the game amongst boys
- improving the standard of play
- uniform interpretation of the Laws of the Game and system for dealing with breaches
- promotion of interstate games
- visit of an international team
- determining amateur and professional status, and
- how to better utilise the power of the press.

The first international match played by Australia was against New Zealand 11 years later, followed by China, Canada and England in subsequent years.

The formation of FFA's predecessor



Detail from etching by Gustav Mutzel in 1862 with what appears to be a game of kick-to-kick taking place in the background by a group of indigenous people.

body came at least 36 years after the first football match was played in Australia.

Historian Dr Ian Syson of Victoria University says the first recorded game took place in Woogaroo – now known as Goodna an outer suburb of Brisbane – in 1875 in a match between the Brisbane Football Club and the inmates and warders of the Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum.

Syson believes there is a fascinating story waiting to be told about this match. But he also believes that research may yet reveal earlier games especially in

light of the settlements of English migrants in the mid 1800s in Victoria and elsewhere.

Guoth added that the inaugural CFA was suspended during World War I but was reconstituted ten years later. In its first 100 years, the national governing body has gone through several name changes, a suspension by FIFA in 1960 and several government reviews in its first 100 years – the most recent completed earlier this month with the release of the Smith Report. On the field in that time, Australia has also made the FIFA World Cup on three

occasions, the Women's World Cup on five occasions and has seen the sport in its indoor and outdoor forms grow to be played by 1.7 million people.

FMA is confident of continued growth in the game and looks forward to celebrating the sesquicentenary in 2061.

To commemorate the 100th anniversary, the FMA is inviting everyone to nominate their top 25 players of the past 100 years. Please go to www.fma.org.au for further details.

Football Time Line

1863: The Cambridge Rules are rewritten to provide the game's first uniform regulations.

1866: The offside law is changed to allow players to be onside provided there are three players between the ball and the goal.

1882: The associations in Great Britain unify their rules and form the International Football Association Board (IFAB) to control the laws of the game.

1886: The first official meeting of the IFAB takes place.

1891: Introduction of the penalty-kick.

1913: FIFA becomes a member of the IFAB.

1925: Amendment of the offside rule from three to two players.

1938: The present Laws of the Game are framed in a new system of codification, based on the Laws previously in force.

1958: Substitutes are permitted for the first time, albeit only for an injured goalkeeper and one other injured player.

1970: The system of red and yellow cards is introduced for the 1970 FIFA World Cup finals.

1990: The offside law is changed in favour of the attacker, who is now onside if level with the penultimate defender.

1992: Goalkeepers are forbidden from handling back-passes.

1994: The technical area is introduced into the Laws of the Game, with the Fourth Official following the next year.

1996: Linesmen are renamed Assistant Referees.

1997: The Laws are revised.

CEO for Asian Cup

Football Federation Australia (FFA) has announced the appointment of a CEO of the Local Organising Committee (LOC) for the AFC Asian Cup 2015.

Michael Brown, a senior executive with a career spanning 21 years in Australian professional sports administration, will commence in the role early next year.

Brown comes to the role after nine years as General Manager, Cricket, with Cricket Australia. He previously served for six years as CEO of AFL club Hawthorn.

FFA Chairman Frank Lowy AC said today he was delighted to have secured such a high-calibre CEO following an international executive search.

"Michael Brown will bring the right mix of international event experience, organisational acumen and business skills to the role," said Mr Lowy.

"This tournament is the pinnacle for the 46 nations of the AFC who represent half the world's population and some of the most passionate fans found anywhere."

"Australia has been entrusted with hosting rights and today's announcement of a highly-regarded executive as CEO shows we are determined to stage a world-class event that will make Australia and Asia proud."

Michael Brown holds tertiary qualifications in Education and Business Administration and began his career in professional sport administration in 1990.

His role with Cricket Australia included responsibilities for international event scheduling, industrial relations, high performance, government relations and commercial functions.

"This is shaping as the most exciting and challenging role of my career," said Mr Brown.

"The scale and scope of the 2015 AFC Asian Cup makes it one of world football's biggest and most important events."

"I'm honored to have been appointed as CEO and look forward to helping build a world-class organising team."

The AFC Asian Cup 2015 is scheduled for January 2015. Matches in the 16-nation tournament will be played in Victoria, NSW, ACT and Queensland.

The Qantas Socceroos were runners-up in the AFC Asian Cup 2011 played in Qatar.

Cole announced as SFC Football Director

Sydney FC has made another significant step forward in its three-year plan with the appointment of respected and experienced football administrator Gary Cole to the newly created position of Football Director.

Cole will be responsible for the Sydney FC Football Department, specifically managing the Club's recruitment and retention, high performance, health science, player welfare and football operations.

The former Socceroo, capped 19 times for Australia, will work closely with Sydney FC CEO Dirk Melton and the Sky Blues coaching and football staff to enhance the systems and processes that will develop a high performance culture at the club.

"The appointment of Gary Cole as Football Director is another exciting step forward in the delivery of Sydney FC's three year plan," said Sydney FC CEO Dirk Melton. "We went through an exhaustive process to find the person with the right skills and experience for what is a very specific and crucial role at the Club."

"Gary fulfilled all of the criteria that we were looking for. He also has a track record of putting into place and developing a strong football department that, coupled with our existing coaching and football staff, will give Sydney FC a



Gary Cole (right) with Aaron Healy in their Victory days.

well-structured football department."

Cole joins Sydney FC after he was instrumental in setting up the football department and operations at Hyundai A-League rivals Melbourne Victory from 2005 to 2011, which was widely regarded as the best in Australian football at the time.

"I'm really excited about the opportunity that Sydney FC has given me," Cole said. "I like what the club is trying to achieve and the plans the manage-

ment have for the future direction of the football club."

"Sydney FC has some very skilful and well-respected coaches and staff in place and I look forward to working with them to create a football department that functions well with the rest of the business to allow the entire Club to be successful."

Cole will start his new position in early January.

OPPORTUNITY KNOX FOR COMMUNITY FOOTBALL AT NEW CENTRE

By George Stogiannou

The FFV hopes to increase community access to the world game with the launch of the new \$ 30 million Knox Regional Football Centre in Melbourne's South East.

The centre features nine small artificial turf pitches and floodlighting designed for five-a-side games, as well as a full sized artificial pitch. Speaking at the official opening, FFV chairman Nick Monteleone said, the new centre will give the football community "the opportunity for 25,000 extra matches each year, with the introduction of 'Football Fives', a five-a-side form of the game to be played on the nine small pitches.

The FFV is hoping this form of the game will attract players of all ages and skill levels.

Monteleone said the idea for the new facility was first floated three years ago when Victoria was in the grip of the drought and there were serious concerns about the parched state of Melbourne's sports grounds.

The FFV is to administer the centre which will which also feature a full sized artificial pitch to be used for FFV

matches and coaching. Local club Knox City will use the facility as its base in 2012 whilst its present quarters undergo refurbishment.

Funding for the new \$ 30 million centre comes from a number of sources including, the City of Knox council

which provided \$ 14 million, the State government with \$ 8.1 million, the Federal Government with \$ 7 million and the FFV with \$ 1.5 million.

The Football Five league competitions are scheduled to start in February 2012.



(From Left) FFV President Nick Monteleone, Federal Minister for Sport and Recreation and Veteran Affairs, the Hon Hugh Delahunty, Knox City Council Mayor Adam Gill, the Hon Kim Wells MP and the Hon Anna Burke MP cut the ribbon at the Knox Regional Football Centre.

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SCOREBOARD

TABLE	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1 Brisbane Roar	11	6	2	3	23	11	12	20
2 Central Coast Mariners	10	6	2	2	17	8	9	20
3 Melbourne Heart	10	4	3	3	14	12	2	15
4 Wellington Phoenix	11	4	3	4	12	10	2	15
5 Sydney FC	10	4	3	3	12	11	1	15
6 Newcastle Jets	10	4	1	5	11	15	-4	13
7 Perth Glory	10	4	1	5	9	13	-4	13
8 Melbourne Victory	10	2	6	2	11	12	-1	12
9 Adelaide United	10	2	4	4	8	18	-10	10
10 Gold Coast United	10	1	3	6	11	18	-7	6

THIS WEEK	Week 11	Fixture	Venue	Local	AEDT
	Fri 16 Dec 2011	Adelaide United v Gold Coast United	Hindmarsh Stadium	7:30pm	8:00pm
	Sat 17 Dec 2011	Newcastle Jets v Sydney FC	Ausgrid Stadium	5:30pm	5:30pm
	Sat 17 Dec 2011	Brisbane Roar v Central Coast Mariners	Suncorp Stadium	6:45pm	7:45pm
	Sat 17 Dec 2011	Perth Glory v Melbourne Heart	nib Stadium	7:00pm	10:00pm
	Sun 18 Dec 2011	Melbourne Victory v Wellington Phoenix	AAMI Park	5:00pm	5:00pm

NEXT WEEK	Week 12	Fixture	Venue	Local	AEDT
	Thur 22 Dec 2011	Sydney FC v Adelaide United	Sydney Football Stadium	7:30pm	7:30pm
	Fri 23 Dec 2011	Wellington Phoenix v Newcastle Jets	Westpac Stadium	7:30pm	5:30pm
	Fri 23 Dec 2011	Melbourne Heart v Melbourne Victory	AAMI Park	8:00pm	8:00pm
	Fri 23 Dec 2011	Perth Glory v Central Coast Mariners	nib Stadium	7:00pm	10:00pm
	Mon 26 Dec 2011	Gold Coast United v Brisbane Roar	Skilled Park	6:30pm	7:30pm

ROUND 10 RESULTS

Brisbane Roar 1 (Mitch Nichols 78')	Central Coast Mariners 2 (Rostyn Griffiths 25', Matt Simon 59')
Melbourne Heart 2 (Jonathan Germano 12', Eli Babalj 27')	Newcastle Jets 0 Saturday, 10 December 2011 Venue: Bluetonge Stadium
Wellington Phoenix 1 (Ben Sigmund 85')	Melbourne Victory 1 (Archie Thompson 69')
Perth Glory 0 Saturday, 10 December 2011 Venue: Westpac Stadium	Adelaide United 1 (Fabien Barbiero 82) Sunday, 10 December Venue: Etihad Stadium

TOP GOAL SCORERS

9 - Besart Berisha (Roar)
5 - Ryan Griffiths (Jets),
Shane Smeltz (Glory),
Carlos Hernandez (Victory)
4 - James Brown (GCUFC,
Nick Carle (SFC), Jeremy Brock (Jets), Mate Dugandzic (Heart), Henrique (Roar), Matt Simon (Mariners), Archie Thompson (Victory),



Victory's Archie Thompson has been in super form for Victory and is slowly making his way up the charts

Wellington Phoenix



Brisbane Roar



Match Details

Wellington Phoenix 2 (Paul Ifill 8', Nick Ward 82')
Brisbane Roar 0
Forsyth Barr Stadium, Dunedin
Referee: Gerard Parsons
Crowd: 4628

Wellington Phoenix squad: 2. Manny Muscat, 4. Brent Griffiths 6. Tim Brown, 7. Leo Bertos, 8. Paul Ifill (24. Alex Smith 81'), 9. Chris Greenacre, 12. Nicky Ward, 17. Vince Lia, 18. Ben Sigmund, 20 Tony Warner (GK), 22. Andrew Durante (c)

Substitutes not used: 1. Mark Paston (GK), 11. Daniel, 15. Cameron Lindsay

Yellow cards: Nil

Red cards: Nil
Brisbane Roar Squad: 1. Michael Theoklitos (GK), 3. Shane Stefanutto (c), 4. Matt Jurman , 5. Ivan Franjic, 6. Erik Paarattu, 7. Besart Berisha, 9. Kofi Danning (8. Massimo Murodocca 64'), 11. Issey Nakajima-Farran (24. Nick Fitzgerald 77'), 14. Rocky Visconte (19. Jack Hingert77'), 16. Mohamed Adnan, 17. Mitch Nichols

Substitutes not used: 20. Andrew Redmayne (GK)

Yellow cards: Matt Jurman (8'), Mitch Nichols (80')

Red cards: Nil



A-League | Mid-Week Regional Fixture



Phoenix inflict third loss to Roar

By Joe Gallagher

They say that records are made to be broken, and Brisbane Roar are feeling the full force of that adage. It's been one hell of a hangover for the Queenslanders and their misery was only further compounded on Wednesday night, slumping to a 2-0 defeat to Wellington Phoenix in Dunedin – their third in succession.

It was a far cry from their 5-1 win against the Phoenix at the same stadium pre-season, and even further from the form that had seen Roar through 36 matches without defeat over the past two campaigns. The summit of the A-League was once theirs by default. Now, they cling to it only by goal differential. Ange Postecoglou simply must be feeling the pressure from the Central Coast Mariners – his next opponents – having played a game more. But in the other dugout Ricki Herbert must be delighted. After scraping a fortuitous 1-0 win against Perth on Saturday, his side have now shown their class with a hugely contrasting performance - this result built on disciplined defence and ruthlessness in attack.

Herbert was forced to start Brent Griffiths at left back in place of the injured Tony Lochhead, and Nick Ward in place of Dani Sanchez who was injured earlier in the day. Postecoglou gave starts to Kofi Danning, Rocky Visconte and Mohamed Adnan in light of their first home loss (against Melbourne Heart) in two years last Friday night. Paul Ifill got the scoring underway in

the 27th minute, twisting and turning past Matthew Jurman before thumping a shot, which a deflection carried into the far corner. It was a textbook Paul Ifill goal and he has now scored more goals than any other Phoenix player – a deserved accolade for a man who has lit up Wellington and the A-League since his arrival in 2009. And despite the best efforts of Ivan Franjic to get in behind Griffiths, the Roar failed to create any clear cut chances in the first half. Andrew Durante was let off from a very poor backpass to Tony Warner, and Mitch Nichols headed over the top from close range but this was an inspired defensive effort from the Phoenix who have now kept two clean sheets in a row. Coming from behind had become a staple of Brisbane's unbeaten run, and they were far from beaten in the second half. Again, they dominated possession and territory but in recent times it has become apparent that a well organised and disciplined defence can keep them at bay. Herbert's – although makeshift – backline had seemingly learnt the lesson taught by Sydney FC and Melbourne Heart in recent weeks. Durante, Griffiths, Ben Sigmund and Manny Muscat were all excellent for the Phoenix. Bahrain international Adnan's last two competitive visits to New Zealand have left him with few happy memories – two years ago he missed the spot kick that would have taken his country to the World Cup finals ahead of New Zealand, and tonight he fired well over the bar; first from a free-kick, and then from a half volley on the edge of the

penalty area. But as Brisbane pressed they were more and more likely to be opened up at the back. Tim Brown had a goal chalked out for offside before forcing Michael Theoklitos to tip over the bar, and Leo Bertos drew a smart save from the Brisbane keeper minutes later. And with nine minutes to play, Ifill's through ball found Nick Ward in acres of space and the midfielder slotted home to send the small crowd in Dunedin's impressive indoor stadium into raptures. During the goal celebrations, Ifill was substituted for an injury. Wellington could barely contain their excitement after the final whistle. The win moves the Phoenix into equal third ahead of a trip to Melbourne Victory on Sunday – a trip with which they will carry a ton of confidence. The only disappointment in an otherwise superb evening for Ricki Herbert was that injury sustained by Ifill – the Barbarian having reignited the Phoenix's campaign since his return to fitness a month ago. It wasn't too long ago that Brisbane's fans were triumphantly holding up cards reading '36' – but by the end of the match it was the Yellow Fever taunting them with the number '3'. It had seemed unthinkable to lose a game a fortnight ago, and now the side are staring down the barrel of a fourth successive loss when the high flying Mariners come to town on Saturday, with top spot on the line. It has been a long time since we've said this - and may be an even longer time until we can say it again, but for now, Brisbane Roar are struggling.



Paul Ifill scored the opener against Brisbane Roar and in the process surpasses Shane Smeltz as the all-time top Phoenix scorer.

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Brisbane Roar



1

Melbourne Heart

HEART



2

Match Details

Brisbane Roar 1 (Mitch Nichols 78')
Melbourne Heart 2 (Jonatan Germano 11', Eli Babalj 27')
Suncorp Stadium, Brisbane
Referee: Kris Griffiths-Jones
Crowd: 10, 666

Brisbane Roar: 1. Michael Theoklitos (Gk), 2. Matt Smith (C), 3. Shane Stefanutto, 4. Matt Jurman, 5. Ivan Franjic, 6. Erik Paartalu, 7. Besart Berisha, 8. Massimo Muroccca (9. Kofi Danning 65'), 11. Issey Nakajima-Farran (14. Rocky Visconte 65', 17. Mitch Nichols, 24. Nick Fitzgerald
Substitutes (Not Used): 16. Mohamed Adnan, 30. Matthew Acton (GK)

Yellow Cards: Massimo Muroccca 23', Matt Jurman 89'
Red Cards: Nil

Melbourne Heart: 1. Clint Bolton, 2. Michael Marrone, 3. Brendan Hamill, 5. Fred, 6. Mayy Thompson, 7. Rutger Worm (9. Maycon 74'), 13. Jonatan Germano (18. Curtis Good 79'), 16. Aziz Behich, 19. Eli Babalj (17. Jason Hoffman 61'), 23. Mate Dugandzic, 25. Adrian Madaschi
Substitutes (Not Used): 30. Sebastian Mattei

Yellow Cards: Jonatan Germano 12', Rutger Worm 20', Michael Marrone 79'
Red Cards: Nil

Christmas cheer arrives early for Heart

By Jarrod Ellis

After 36 games unbeaten and only two losses in 455 days the Roar have now suffered consecutive defeats, going down 2-1 to a determined Melbourne Heart outfit on Friday night.

With their unbeaten run finally snapped there was speculation as to how the Roar would respond, but few seriously believed that Melbourne would be able to take three points from the champions. However, first half goals from Jonatan Germano and Eli Babalj gave the visitors a 2-0 lead and from there they never looked back, adroitly handling a Brisbane side bereft of Thomas Broich and Henrique.

Broich was a late withdrawal from the teamsheet, the German had previously been expected to play but was withdrawn before the match. Ange Postecoglou cited the club's packed fixture schedule as the reason for not changing the fitness of his star midfielder.

The Heart have been in good form of late and started the game showing the touch that has served them so well over the past month. Beating Brisbane at their own game Melbourne dominated possession and field position in the opening stages and it wasn't long until those efforts paid off.

In the 12th minute Heart won a corner from which Mate Dugandzic floated the ball into the Roar penalty area. Jonatan Germano was waiting and lost his man before placing a header past a helpless Michael Theoklitos. Ecstatic with his effort the Argentine produced a previously concealed



Ho! Ho! Ho! Heart's Jonatan Germano snares an early Christmas present after opening the scoring with a well taken header. Photo: ADRIAN GAGLIONE

Santa hat in celebration, but match referee Kris Griffith-Jones didn't share in the Christmas spirit and booked him for his efforts.

Having conceded an early goal for the second time in as many weeks Brisbane attempted to respond in kind but their play remained disjointed and reminiscent of their performance at Kogarah last week.

Melbourne then compounded Brisbane's woes in the 27th minute. Losing possession on halfway the Roar was punished once again by the com-

bination of Germano and Dugandzic. Evading the offside trap the Argentine curled the ball across the face of goal to Dugandzic whose quick touch set up youngster Eli Babalj to score his second goal of the campaign.

The Heart were well on top by this point and ended the first half with a flurry of quality chances to add a third, but the shots went wide or the Roar defence scrambled and the score stayed locked at 2-0 at the interval.

Not much changed when the two

sides returned to the pitch, Brisbane showed more composure on the ball but by this stage Melbourne were more than happy to soak up pressure and attempt to hit on the counter.

Postecoglou made a double change twenty minutes into the half, introducing Rocky Visconte and Kofi Danning at the expense of Nakajima-Farran and Massimo Muroccca in an attempt to break down the Heart defence, the appearance Visconte's first this Hyundai A-League season.

Just as Brisbane looked to be re-

signed to defeat, substitute Kofi Danning took the ball on the top of the area and broke through the defence, dribbling to the byline before then squaring back for a trailing Nichols to tap home.

With twelve minutes remaining and only a goal behind Brisbane appeared rejuvenated, surging forward in search of an equaliser.

The home side's best hopes to draw level came from a succession of Besart Berisha free kicks in the dying stages, but a combination of desperate defending and a near miss from Erik Paartalu conspired to deny a grandstand finish and Heart exited the pitch with a deserved victory.

After the match Ange Postecoglou was honest in the appraisal of his side's performance.

"The first half wasn't great," he said.

"We gave the ball away too much and the way we play our game, if we give the ball away too much not only does it mean we don't create much but it gives the opposition opportunities.

"They took their goals and our second half was better, we pushed on and dominated the game like usually do but couldn't get the second goal and we fell short."



Match Stats

1	Saves	2
3	Attempts on target	4
5	Attempts off target	2
56%	Possession	44%
2	Corners	5
2	Offsides	5
11	Fouls committed	16



Roar's Michael Theklitos is unable to stop Eli Babalj's effort from finding the net after some unselfish play by Mate Dugandzic. Photo: ADRIAN GAGLIONE



Heart keeper Clint Bolton takes control in his penalty area to collect the ball and diffuse any danger. Photo: ADRIAN GAGLIONE

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Wellington Phoenix

1

Perth Glory

0

Match Details

Wellington Phoenix 1
(Ben Sigmund 85)
Perth Glory 0
Venue: Westpac Stadium

Wellington Phoenix: 20.Tony Warner, 2.Manny Muscat, 3.Tony Lochhead (11. Daniel Cortes), 6.Tim Brown, 7.Leo Bertos, 8.Paul Ifill, 9.Chris Greenacre (12.Nick Ward 83'), 17.Vince Lia, 18.Ben Sigmund (21.Dani Sanchez 76'), 22.Andrew Durante, 14.Mirjan Pavlovic.

Yellow cards: Lochhead, Brown, Ifill.
Red cards: Pavlovic

Perth Glory: 1.Danny Vukovic, 2.Josh Mitchell, 3.Bas van Den Brink, 7.Jacob Burns, 8.Adam Hughes, 9.Shane Smeltz, 10.Liam Miller, 17.Todd Howarth, 21.Mile Sterjovski (15.Tony Amphet 71'), 25.Trent McClenahan (5.Steve Pantelidis 87'), 27.Andrezinho (4.Billy Mehmet 76').

Yellow cards: Mitchell, Howarth.
Red cards: None

By Joe Gallagher

Ben Sigmund proved the unlikely hero on Saturday as Wellington Phoenix dealt Perth Glory their fifth loss of the season with a late 1-0 win. The match had been billed as the match up of strikers Shane Smeltz and Paul Ifill – both having scored a record 21 goals for the hosts. But the fireworks never came in a very dull first half with more scrappy fouls than shots on goal, the best chance possibly a tame effort by Chris Greenacre that was saved comfortably by Perth stopper Danny Vukovic. Ifill, especially, had one of his more quiet games after an explosive return from injury. Vukovic, who will have fond memories of Westpac Stadium having spent last season as a fan favourite in Wellington, received a warm welcome and had one of his more eccentric games, twice racing the length of the pitch to be involved in a Perth set piece, one culminating in an outrageous fluffed overhead kick from a Glory corner. He was nearly beaten by an excellent Sanchez free kick in the second half which fizzed past his But although entertaining, Vukovic's performance were ultimately in vain as Sigmund nicked ahead of the Glory defender at the near post to head home a Leo Bertos corner in the 86th minute. The Phoenix should consider themselves lucky to have picked up the full three points, having struggled to create chances all evening, and could well have thrown the win away in stoppage time. Striker Mirjan Pavlovic was marched for a cynical late lunge on Steve Pantelidis. It was stupidity that Herbert could ill afford, his side already having suffered from suspensions this season and only



Wellington's Manny Muscat gets shirted by Perth Glory pair Liam Miller and Todd Howarth.
Photo: PETER McDONALD

just starting to reach full strength. It will be especially frustrating for Pavlovic, who has impressed off the bench in recent weeks after very rare appearances in his spell at the Phoenix. It was, in fact, his work which led to the corner from which Wellington took the lead. And Phoenix goalkeeper Tony Warner was nervy (though ultimately unbeaten) at the back, flapping at a few crosses late on – one of which leading to a shot from Smeltz which, on a luckier day,

might have won a penalty for handball. The calls for the reinstatement of Mark Paston in goal will only grow more vocal this week. It's been a very disappointing week for the Glory, having failed to travel to Sydney on Tuesday, and now will take the long haul back to Western Australia for the visit of Melbourne Heart next Saturday. For Herbert it's a confidence boost, looking ahead to the midweek trip to host

Brisbane Roar on Wednesday. Unlikely as it may sound, the Phoenix are now in better form than the champions. The win catapults them once again towards a top six berth – and to have won in such a gritty manner in the New Zealand capital is a welcome result for a side that have this season faltered under pressure. Perhaps most relieving is the fact that with the win, Phoenix have put daylight between themselves and the cellar dwellers of the competition.

For Ian Ferguson, his side fall back to sixth on the ladder. They are now only one point ahead of the Phoenix and have lost ground on the likes of Central Coast Mariners and Newcastle Jets, the sides above them in the league. So while the match itself may not have been the most memorable, three points here were a must for the hosts. In a logjam of a mid table, turning draws into wins could be the spark which ignites a mid season surge to the playoffs.

Match Stats

2	Saves	2
5	Attempts on target	4
5	Attempts off target	5
55%	Possession	45%
6	Corners	1
0	Offsides	1
18	Fouls committed	13

Phoenix's Ben Sigmund keeps close control as Glory's Andrezinho hovers nearby.
Photo: PETER McDONALD



Phoenix's Paul Ifill slides in to tackle Todd Howarth.
Photo: PETER McDONALD



The ball eludes Tim Brown as he gets airborne. Photo: PETER McDONALD

CC Mariners

2

Newcastle Jets

0

Match Details

Central Coast Mariners 2 (Griffiths 25', Simon 59')

Newcastle Jets 0

Referee: Strebre Delovski

Crowd: 10,643 At Bluetongue Stadium, Gosford

Central Coast Mariners: 1. Mathew Ryan (Gk), 3. Joshua Rose, 4. Pedj Bojic, 6. Patrick Zwaanswijk, 7. John Hutchinson, 8. Rostyn Griffiths, 9. Bernie Ibini (11. Oliver Bozanic 88') 14. Michael McGlinchey (12. Troy Hearfield 83'), 18. Alex Wilkinson (C), 19. Matt Simon, 22. Mustafa Amini (2. Daniel McBreen 78')

Subs Not Used: 20. Justin Pasfield (Gk)

Yellow Cards: Zwaanswijk 26'

Red Cards: None

Newcastle Jets: 19. Matthew Nash (Gk), 4. Nikolai Topor Stanley, 5. Tiago Calvano, 7. Kasey Wehrman (22. Ali Abbas 66'), 8. Jeremy Brockie, 10. Ruben Zadkovich, 11. Tarek Elrich, 12. Jobe Wheelhouse (C) (6. Ben Kantarovski 81'), 13. Sung-Hwan Byun, 14. Labinot Haliti (24. Francis Jeffers 58'), 23. Ryan Griffiths

Subs Not Used: 1. Ben Kennedy (Gk)

Yellow Cards: Haliti 12'

Red Cards: None

Mariners continue to impress

By Adrian Dean

As I suggested in my preview, there might be some bigger rivalries in terms of fan numbers, but there are none that excite quite the same level of passion between the rival camps of fans.

Fans always hate losing, but Mariners fans hate nothing more than losing to the Jets, and vice versa. The streets outside the respective stadiums can be very unfriendly after a home loss and the trains heading north out of Gosford, or south out of Newcastle, are not for the faint hearted.

And it's always close – twenty-four previous derbies for eight wins apiece and eight draws. Irrespective of where either team is on the table, or what sort of form they're in, these games are guaranteed to be tightly fought because the fans of either team demand nothing less than 100% commitment to the cause.

This time, however, despite a two nil scoreline, it wasn't that close. The Mariners, coming off a four nil dissection of Adelaide, were a cut above all over the park. The Jets were also coming off a win but the Mariners, after a slow start, are now the form team of the competition.

The Mariners rise more-or-less coincides with the return to fitness of Mustafa Amini who is now showing exactly why he will be playing for one of the best teams in Germany next year. The quality of his vision and passing in the final third separates the good teams from the excellent and in Bernie Amini and Matt Simon he has the perfect mobile targets – running the channels or getting in behind. We saw several instances of these combinations in the first 20 minutes, with Topor-Stanley and Tiago desperately keeping tabs.

For all his passing skill, however, Amini infrequently features on the scoresheet. He tried to do something about that in the 24th minute when he hit a superbly



Rostyn Griffiths salutes the Bluetongue faithful after drawing first blood in the F3 derby.
Photo: BEN NEVILLE

	Match Stats	
2	Saves	5
8	Attempts on target	3
9	Attempts off target	6
48%	Possession	52%
9	Corners	3
6	Offsides	6
12	Fouls committed	9

dipping volley that was brilliantly tipped away by a flying Matthew Nash. The Mariners didn't have to wait much longer though for the opening goal – McGlinchey's corner was met on the corner of the six yard box by Rostyn Griffiths' header that somehow crept past Tarek Elrich on the near post.

The Jets then managed to claw their way back into the contest – the Mariners continued to create regular chances but the Jets made a couple themselves. Ryan Griffiths' pile-driver from 30 metres would have tested Mat Ryan had it not come off Labinot Haliti's shoulder.

Then seconds before half time, Amini could have doubled the lead when he

found himself 20 metres out with the ball at his feet and two strikers in better position to score. He elected to shoot and saw his effort deflected by the desperate Topor-Stanley (who had a very good game in a beaten side).

The Mariners went up a gear in the second half. Chances were created for both Bojic and McGlinchey, but then on 60 minutes, Amini once again put Ibini in behind the Jets' defence and his hard, low cross was pushed by Nash straight into the path of Matt Simon who couldn't miss from four metres.

Five minutes later, Josh Rose set up Ibini who should have scored but smashed his shot onto the crossbar. A third goal would have put the game beyond doubt even with twenty-five to

go, but after that the Mariners closed up shop – as though they were already thinking about Brisbane next week.

Amini was replaced with fifteen to go, to give him the early rest his performance had deserved. He'll find a lot less space in which to operate next week against the likes of Paartalu and Murdocca.

The Mariners are playing excellent football. With the exception of Haliti's offside effort in the opening minutes, the Jets didn't have a single clear chance to score due to the Mariners' well organised defence. At the other end, it might easily have been four or five (with Ibini the most profligate) and it speaks volumes for the Mariners' depth that a player the calibre of Ollie

Bozanic can't break into the starting line-up.

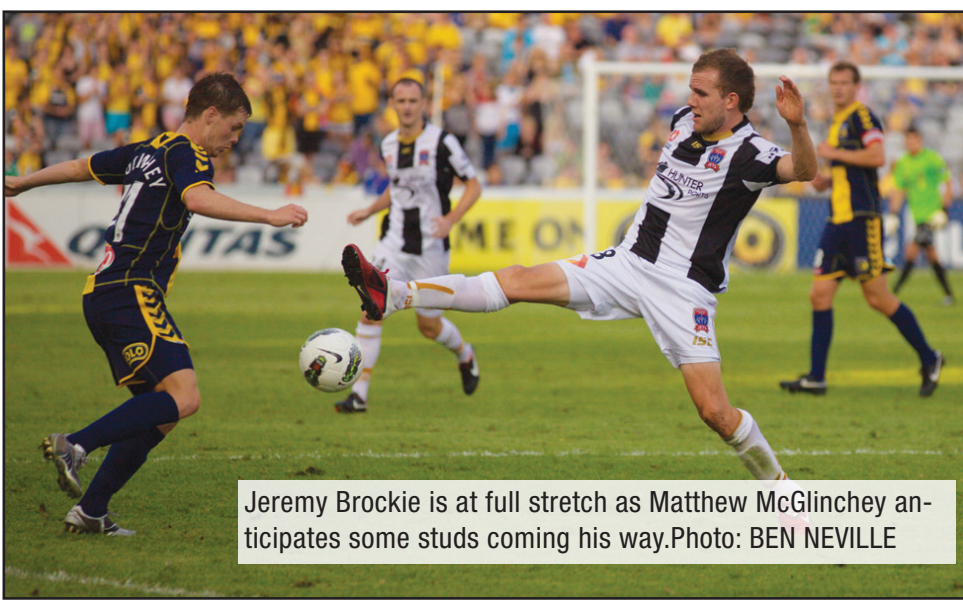
The result means that the Mariners have now gone seven games without defeat and are equal top with Brisbane which sets up the game of the season next Saturday at Suncorp.

I, for one, would be prepared to bet large amounts of dollars that the Mariners will certainly be there on Grand Final day. The Roar might be also.

Adrian Deans is the author of Mr Cleansheets – published by Vulgar Press, distributed by Dennis Jones and Associates and available in all good book stores. ebook also available at www.mrcleansheets.com



Mustafa Amini holds his ground.
Photo: BEN NEVILLE



Jeremy Brockie is at full stretch as Matthew McGlinchey anticipates some studs coming his way.Photo: BEN NEVILLE



Matt Simon points the way after putting the Mariners 2-0 up. Photo: PETE NEVILLE

Melbourne Victory

MELBOURNE Victory F.C. 1

Adelaide United

ADELAIDE UNITED F.C. 1

Match Details

Melbourne Victory 1 (Thompson 59')
Adelaide United FC 1 (Barbiero 82')
Referee: Peter Green
Crowd: 16,562 @ Etihad Stadium

Melbourne Victory line-up: 21.Ante Covic (GK), 2.Matthew Foschini, 3.Fabio (11.Marco Rojas 76'), 4.Jon McKain (c), 5.Daniel Mullen (14.Cameron Watson 66'), 7.Zenon Caravella, 9.Sergio van Dijk, 11.Bruce Djite (22.Milan Susak 89'), 17.Iain Ramsay, 18.Fabian Barbiero, 21.Francisco Usucar

Substitutes not used: 18.Danny Allsopp, 20.Lawrence Thomas (GK)
Yellow Cards: Nil
Red Cards: Nil

Adelaide United line-up: 1.Eugene Galekovic (gk), 2.Osama Malik (10.Dario Vidosis 46'), 3.Nigel Boogaard, 4.Jon McKain (c), 5.Daniel Mullen (14.Cameron Watson 66'), 7.Zenon Caravella, 9.Sergio van Dijk, 11.Bruce Djite (22.Milan Susak 89'), 17.Iain Ramsay, 18.Fabian Barbiero, 21.Francisco Usucar

Substitutes not used: 20.Mark Birighitti (gk)
Yellow Cards: Barbiero 33'
Red Cards: Nil

Barbiero's late strike saves Reds

By Daniel Quinn

Adelaide United scored a late equaliser to take a point from Melbourne Victory thanks to a late strike from Fabian Barbiero.

Hosts Victory made one change from their defeat to Newcastle last week with Matthew Foschini returning from suspension to replace Marco Rojas. Adelaide made three changes from their smashing from Central Coast Mariners with Daniel Mullen, Nigel Boogaard and Sergio Van Dijk in for Milan Susak, Cameron Watson and Ricardo Da Silva.

Victory started off on the front foot through Harry Kewell who was played in by Archie Thompson before shooting straight at Eugene Galekovic in goal for Adelaide. However the referee pulled the ball back for a free-kick and Carlos Hernandez's ball was spilled by Galekovic before Adrian Leijer's shot was saved by a closing Galekovic.

Adelaide couldn't create any chances until on 23 minutes when Iain Ramsay put in a beautiful cross but Zenon Caravella couldn't control. The ball fell for Fabian Barbiero who blasted the ball over.

Three minutes later Harry Kewell, who was back after being rested against LA Galaxy, headed over from Matt Foschini's great cross.

The game started to fire up with Kewell and Caravella starting a melee. Only a minute later Fabian Barbiero was carded after a high arm into the face of Broxham.

The game didn't offer anything until first-half stoppage time when Nigel Boogaard missed an easy header. Kewell was in one-on-one and as he



Archie Thompson celebrates with Victory fans after breaking the deadlock. Photo: ANITA MILAS

saw Galekovic off his line he chipped the 'keeper but Galekovic pulled out a magnificent save to tip wide.

Six minutes into the second-half Adelaide created the half's first chance with Daniel Mullen crossing for Barbiero whose header was direction straight at Covic for an easy save.

On 59 minutes Archie Thompson opened the scoring with a header past Galekovic after Fabio's great cross. Thompson's fourth of the season.

Three minutes later Harry Kewell could have made it 2-0 but his first-time shot went wide after Hernandez's

great long ball.

Although Victory had the momentum Brue Djite turned well in the opposition box before his left footed strike sailed into the stands.

On 67 minutes Thompson could have doubled the lead but his right footed shot was saved fantastically by Galekovic.

On 82 minutes Adelaide had an equaliser through Fabian Barbiero. A well made move which included Van Dijk and Caravella was well finished in the bottom corner by the midfielder.

Only one minute later Victory were

right up the other end with substitute Marco Rojas whose low ball found Kewell at the far post, however Kewell's finish was cleared off the line by Cameron Watson.

Two minutes into stoppage time Grant Brebner could have won it after Kewell hit a low ball across the six yard box but the Scottish midfielder couldn't connect. It finished 1-1.

Victory remains in eighth with Adelaide remaining in ninth. A game both sides needed to win.

Victory coach Mehmet Durakovic was disappointed. "It was disappoint-

ing having created lots of chances and we played them off the park and dominated possession. We had a lot of chances and they had one shot and they scored and that is Football. At least the boys are playing the Football that I want them to and thought they deserved more than a point."

Adelaide coach Rini Coolen was pleased to at least go home with a point. "We would prefer to win games of course but with the situation where we come from the last few weeks and the players we had available for our 4-3-2-1 system we did as good as we could."

MELBOURNE Victory	Match Stats	ADELAIDE UNITED F.C.
2	Saves	5
7	Attempts on target	5
4	Attempts off target	4
48%	Possession	52%
10	Corners	0
1	Offsides	0
12	Fouls committed	14

Adelaide United's Fabian Barbiero punches the air after displaying some never die spirit with a late equaliser. Photo: DANIEL FLIS



One with the lot thanks! Harry Kewell cops an Adelaide United sandwich courtesy of Daniel Mullen and Nigel Boogaard. Photo: DANIEL FLIS

MELBOURNE Victory F.C.

V

NEWCASTLE UNITED JETS

Saturday January 7

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Gold Coast United

0

Sydney FC

0

Match Details

GOLD COAST UNITED 0
SYDNEY FC 0

At Skilled Park, Gold Coast
Crowd: 2,984
Referee: Ben Williams

Gold Coast United:
1.Glen Moss [gk], 3.Michael Thwaite (c), 5.Kristian Rees, 6.Paul Beekmans, 12.Dylan Macallister (17.Chris Harold 66'), 14.Ben Halloran, 15.Adama Traore, 16.Maceo Rigters (21.Daniel Severino 88'), 18.James Brown, 22.Peter Jungschlager, 24.Jonas Salley.

Unused subs: 20.Jerrad Tyson [gk], 23.Dylan McGowan.
Yellow cards: Brown 82', Halloran 86'
Red cards: None.

Sydney FC:
1. Liam Reddy [gk], 3.Jamie Coyne, 4.Pascal Bosschaart, 5.Michael Beauchamp, 7.Brett Emerton, 8.Karol Kisel, 9.Bruno Cazarine (18.Juho Makela 54'), 10.Nick Carle, 11.Dimi Petratos (23.Rhyan Grant 73'), 12.Shannon Cole, 15.Terry McFlynn (c).
Unused subs: 20.Ivan Necevski [gk], 2.Sebastian Ryall.

Yellow cards: Coyne 19', Cazarine 30', Cole 34', Bosschaart 45+2', McFlynn 68', Kisel 74', Beauchamp 82'.
Red cards: None.

Gold Coast snap poor run of results

By Neil Favager

GOLD Coast United picked up their first clean sheet of the season and also snapped their recent run of poor results with a hard-fought 0-0 draw against Sydney FC at a wet Skilled Park.

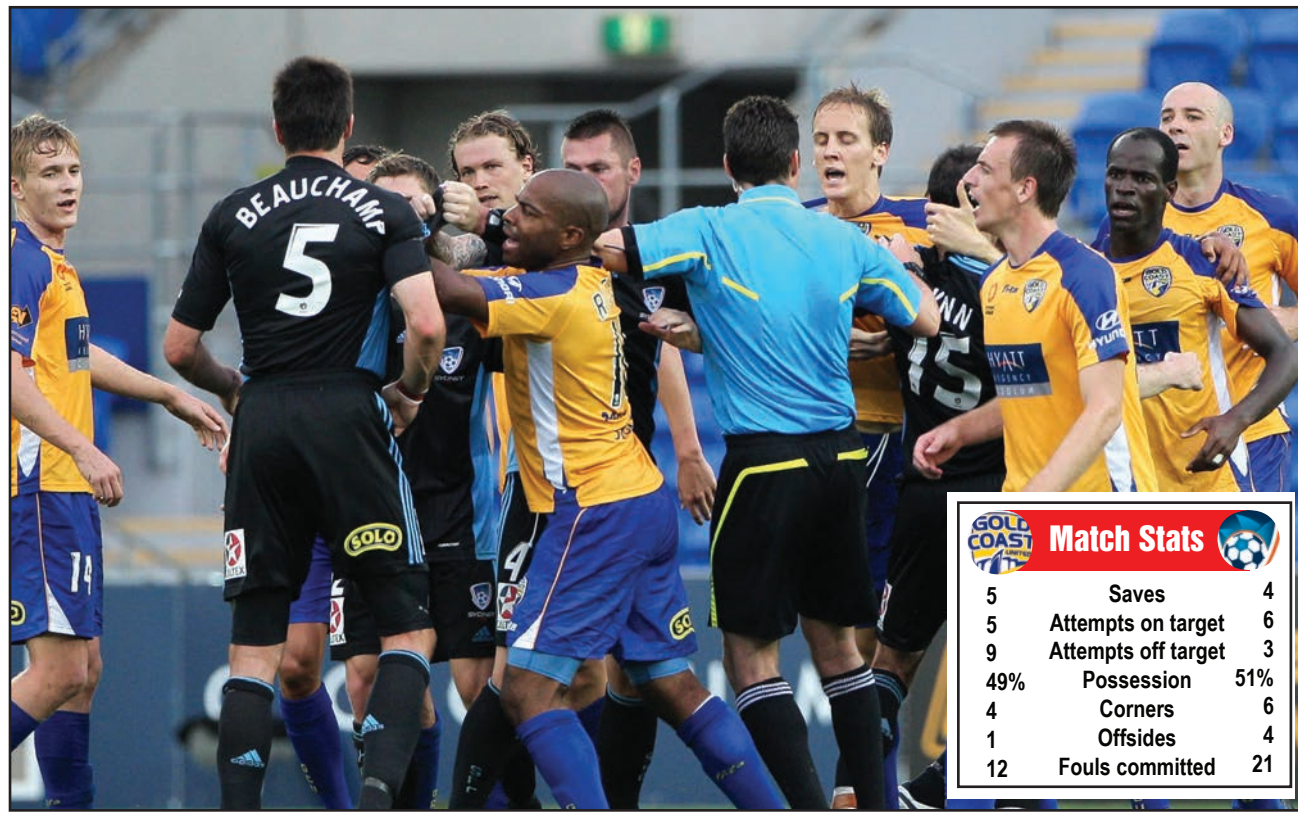
A draw was just about the right result on the night with both sides having opportunities to win it and United denied what looked like a clear penalty midway through the second half.

United Head Coach Miron Bleiberg said afterwards that he hopes the result will be the catalyst to an upturn in results and he has every reason to have confidence in his troops after a gritty performance against the sky blues.

The match was an arm wrestle at times with plenty of fiery challenges resulting in nine yellow cards - seven for the visitors and two for United with the battle for the points also threatening to boil over once or twice.

After beating Brisbane last week Sydney went with an unchanged line-up, but Gold Coast made several alterations as Bleiberg went with a more experienced starting side. Back in were Dutch duo Peter Jungschlager and Paul Beekmans, who both sat out last week with injuries. Compatriot Maceo Rigters also reclaimed his starting spot up front in an attacking trio that included Dylan Macallister and Ben Halloran.

There were early chances for



Match Stats		
5	Saves	4
5	Attempts on target	6
9	Attempts off target	3
49%	Possession	51%
4	Corners	6
1	Offsides	4
12	Fouls committed	21

Bringing back the biff! Tempers boil over as Gold Coast and Sydney FC players engage in some argy bargy. Photo: ADRIAN GAGLIONE

both sides with Shannon Cole's free-kick forcing Glen Moss into some early work between the United posts and James Brown going agonisingly close with a 20-metre drive that shaved the Sydney woodwork.

A compact Sydney were doing everything possible to deny United space, a tactic that worked well against Brisbane, but Gold Coast grew in confidence as the half wore on even if there was little to show for their efforts on the scoreboard.

Adama Traore had one of the best chances of the half, his low left-footed drive to Liam Reddy's near post would have sneaked in had the Sydney custodian's reflexes not been at their best.

Just before the break Maceo Rigters had a good sight of goal when a lovely pass from Ben Halloran put him beyond his marker, but the Dutch striker screwed his shot wide.

Just after the restart Gold Coast

had Glen Moss to thank for keeping the scoreline blank when he produced a flying fingertip save to deny Karol Kisel's blistering drive from the edge of the box. Kisel was later to miss the best chance of the game, heading over with the goal at his mercy.

United almost broke the deadlock midway through the half when only the heroics of Liam Reddy saved Sydney. Substitute Chris Harold, who had only been on the field for a matter of seconds,

burst into the box only to have his effort smothered by Reddy. The Sydney keeper then recovered quickly to bravely dive at the feet of Ben Halloran and half stop his stab at goal, but the ball failed to cross the line after appearing to strike Sydney defender Shannon Cole's hand.

The two sides traded tired blows late on in search of what would be the winning goal, but both defences held form to take home a share of the spoils.



Gold Coast's Jonas Salley holds his ground as Sydney FC's Karol Kisel goes flying. Photo: ADRIAN GAGLIONE



SFC keeper Liam Reddy is at the ready and shows a safe pair of hands. Photo: ADRIAN GAGLIONE

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Adelaide Utd Line Up

1.Eugene Galekovic (gk)
2.Osama Malik
3.Nigel Boogaard
4.Jon McKain (c)
5.Daniel Mullen
7.Zenon Caravella
8.Evgeniy Levchenko
9.Sergio van Dijk
10.Dario Vidoscic
11.Bruce Djite
13.Ricardo Da Silva
14.Cameron Watson
16.Spase Dilevski
17.Iain Ramsay
18.Fabian Barbiero
20.Mark Birighitti (gk)
21.Francisco Usucar *two to be omitted*

In: Evgeniy Levchenko (promoted), Ricardo Da Silva (promoted), Spase Dilevski (promoted)

Out: Milan Susak (knee – 1 week)

Unavailable: Cassio (ankle - indefinite), Antony Golec (suspended – 1 match)

Adelaide United v Gold Coast United

Fri 16 Dec Hindmarsh Stdm 8:00pm

By Nat Adamopoulos

Despite the single point that home side Adelaide United took away from last week's face saving 1:1 draw against arch nemesis Melbourne Victory, many would say it was again a less than convincing outing by the Reds.

It seems every media interview South Australians have seen of late has players past and present talking about the mate-ship not being there within the team. While fans would expect that to a certain degree with having lost so many squad members from last season, there is an expectation to now put things back on track and just play some good football. If ever there was a time for mates to stand up and be counted, then it has to be this week as Reds keeper Eugene Galekovic marks his 100th game for the SA side. No question about it, if players want a reason to win then this is it! What better way to show their gratitude for two time Hyundai A-League Goalkeeper of the Year, as well as twice named Adelaide United Club Champion and Player's Player, then to perform like they have never performed this season, with heart, soul and bloody good football to pay homage and bow down to their lifesaver gloveman.

On the other side, Miron Bleiberg will have his boys primed, ready to stop that from happening albeit without Joel Porter still recovering from a calf injury and ex-Red Jonas Salley after he was sanctioned for two matches. Add to that the Gold Coast lads don't have to use the excuse of lack of team bonding as that's been an area they've worked on and it showed with their game against Sydney, emphasising the case of 'one in, all in' with their effort and passion to get a result.

This game will be a most interesting one with both teams sides sitting together where they would otherwise prefer not to be at the wrong end of the HAL ladder, both coming off draws from the prior weeks games and both look-



Early six-pointer at Hindmarsh

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Draw 3.40
Gold Coast 4.35

Head-to-Head:
All matches (played 8):
Adelaide United wins 2,
Gold Coast United wins 2 (4 draws)

ing to outwit, outlast and outplay the other. Head-to-head records show that after eight encounters they stand at two wins a piece and four draws, with Adelaide just in front taking out the last 2:1 win less than one month ago. Gold Coast certainly would have gained some confidence from their game against Sydney where most would have predicted a loss for them. But as they have shown they have players that are willing to take on defenders, giving them more chances to score goals. With that their mentality of sticking together, fighting their battles as a team and the ability to grind out a result would put them on good stead to perhaps overcome the troubled homieside this time out.

And going by what their Captain Michael Thwaite has had to say, they are fit and raring to go to do so.

"We have a good record against Adelaide

and none of us have forgotten what happened the last time we played them, so we will go down there absolutely determined to win and put together the start of an unbeaten run," said Thwaite. "We have the weapons in wide positions and that's certainly one of our most productive avenues to goal, we've just got to make sure the chances are finished off when they come."

But they will have to get past that almighty hurdle that is Galekovic and as we have all seen over the last 10 weeks of the HAL, is not easy to do. Perhaps young star Ben Halloran could be the one to do the honours this time, as he has shown with his 'no fear' attitude, all guns a-blazing style that makes him a danger in and around the box. Adelaide have their secret weapon too in Dario Vidoscic, diagnosed to be suffering from a broken back but miraculously taking to the field in

Melbourne last week, Perhaps he may need to deploy a couple of bombs for his side this week to be the hero.

My thoughts are that this will be a case of hard hitting, slog it out football where it's not over till that proverbial 'fat lady sings', and whoever is left standing will take the spoils. Full points won't change Gold Coast's bottom place if they do pull off a victory here, but it could mess with the heads of the Reds and create even more problems with both players and fans if they don't come away with success and could see some heads roll. On the other hand if Adelaide pull off a win, it may start to fix the rift that has come between many in this state.

Kiss of Death
AUFC 2-1 Gold Coast



Gold Coast Line Up

1.Glen Moss (gk)
3.Michael Thwaite (c)
5.Kristian Rees
6.Paul Beekmans
10.Tahj Minniecon
12.Dylan Macallister
13.Ante Rozic
14.Ben Halloran
15.Adama Traore
16.Maceo Rigters
17.Chris Harold
18.James Brown
20.Jerrad Tyson (gk)
21.Daniel Severino
22.Peter Jungschlager
23.Dylan McGowan
24.Jonas Salley
28.Daniel Bowles
29.Mitch Bevan.
four to be omitted

In: Ante Rozic (return from knee injury), Tahj Minniecon (promoted), Daniel Bowles (promoted), Mitch Bevan (promoted).

Out: Nil

Unavailable: Joel Porter (calf – 3 weeks), Chris Broadfoot (ankle injury – 6 weeks).



Jets Line Up

1.Ben Kennedy (gk)
2.Taylor Regan
5.Tiago Calvano
6.Ben Kantarovski
7.Kasey Wehrman
8.Jeremy Brockie
10.Ruben Zadkovich
11.Tarek Elrich
12.Jobe Wheelhouse
13.Sung-Hwan Byun
14.Labinot Haliti
15.Chris Payne
19.Matthew Nash (gk)
22.Ali Abbas
23.Ryan Griffiths
24.Francis Jeffers *one to be omitted*

In: Taylor Regan (promoted), Chris Payne (promoted)

Out: Nikolai Topor-Stanley (Hamstring – 1 week)

Unavailable: Nil

Newcastle Jets v Sydney FC

Sat 17 Dec Ausgrid Stadium 5:30pm

By Shaun Dyas

The Newcastle Jets are eagerly awaiting their chance at redemption as they prepare to face Sydney FC at Ausgrid Stadium this Saturday afternoon.

The home side will be looking to bounce back from a poor showing in the F3 derby and should be smarting from comments that were made by their coach Gary Van Egmond.

After having their character brought into question by their manager, the Jets should no doubt be stung into action and more than ready for the challenge that the Sky Blues pose.

They will need to be ready as Sydney is in the middle of an encouraging run of form lately.

It was Sydney who broke the record 36 game streak of the Brisbane Roar only two weeks ago in their best performance of the season. They followed this up with a fighting point on the road against Gold Coast.

Viteslav Lavicka's side have many talents at their disposal and the Jets will have to pay them close attention. No Sydney star is shining brighter this season than their classy midfield playmaker Nick Carle.

Carle has taken the league by storm this season and has been a constant thorn in the ambitions of his opponents. His silky touches and ability to create chances for his teammates are virtually second to none in this

Jets set to fly against SFC

Head-to-Head: All matches (played 20): Newcastle Jets wins 3, Sydney FC wins 11 (6 draws)

Odds:
Jets 2.38
Draw 3.30
SFC 3.00

Radio broadcaster:
1233 ABC Newcastle

league.

When you pair this with the professionalism and work ethic of ex Blackburn Rovers star Brett Emerton, you have the makings of a quality side.

The Jets have a few concerns heading into this game on the injury front. Midfield general Ruben Zadkovich has been under an injury cloud all week and towering defender Nikolai Topor-Stanley has already been ruled out.

Young defender Taylor Regan has been charged with filling the hole left by Topor-Stanley's injury and he will be looking to impress.

The danger men that Sydney will

have to watch again appear to be Newcastle's wide men in Ryan Griffiths and Jeremy Brockie.

Both these men are having wonderful seasons and again could be the creative spark that the home side count upon to ensure a victory.

It will be interesting to see who Van Egmond favours in goal with regular starter Ben Kennedy being overlooked for the Mariners clash, despite being back to full fitness.

It will be an interesting topic of discussion for the rest of the season if the rumours are believed. Newcastle are said to be interested in signing

young Adelaide keeper Mark Birighitti for next season, which could lead to a duel between the two incumbent keepers to see who will take the other place on the roster for next season.

There is no doubt that this should be a tight match, with Sydney being a side that is very difficult to beat either home or away. The Jets should be fired up in front of their own fans after the stinging words of their coach and a return to Ausgrid tips the balance in their favour.

Kiss of Death
Jets 2-1 SFC



Sydney FC Line Up

1.Liam Reddy (gk)
2.Sebastian Ryall
3.Jamie Coyne
4.Pascal Bosschaart
5.Michael Beauchamp
7.Brett Emerton
8.Karol Kisel
9.Bruno Cazarine
10.Nick Carle
11.Dimi Petratos
12.Shannon Cole
15.Terry McFlynn (c)
17.Terry Antonis
18.Juho Makela
19.Mark Bridge,
20.Ivan Necevski (gk)
21.Scott Jamieson
23.Rhyan Grant *three to be omitted*

In: Terry Antonis (Returns from injury), Mark Bridge (returns from injury)

Out: Nil

Injuries: Nil

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Roar Line Up

1. Michael Theoklitos (GK)
 3. Shane Stefanutto (C)
 4. Matt Jurman
 5. Ivan Franjic
 6. Erik Paaratlu
 7. Besart Berisha
 8. Massimo Murodocca
 9. Kofi Danning
 10. Henrique
 11. Issey Nakajima-Farran
 14. Matt Mundy
 16. Mohamed Adnan
 17. Mitch Nichols
 19. Jack Hingert
 20. Andrew Redmayne (GK)
 24. Nick Fitzgerald
- *one to be omitted*

In: Matt Mundy (promoted)

Out: Nil

Unavailable: James Meyer (adductor injury - 1 week), Thomas Broich (bruised heel - 1 week), Henrique (corked thigh - 1 week), Luke Brattan (foot injury - 1 week), Matt Smith (adductor injury - 1 week)

Brisbane Roar v CC Mariners

Sat 17 Dec Suncorp Stadium 7:45pm

By Jarrod Ellis

After reaching the A-League summit and setting a record unbeaten streak, Brisbane Roar are now well and truly in a slump. Following Wednesday night's convincing 2-0 defeat to Wellington Phoenix any air of invincibility that the reigning champions may have had is well and truly gone.

Three consecutive defeats have seemingly exposed Brisbane's reliance on Thomas Broich and with the German not certain to return for the top of the table clash against the Central Coast Mariners on Saturday the Roar could find themselves on a streak reminiscent of the pre-Postecoglou days.

After an extended run without significant injuries Brisbane are now feeling the bite of the treatment table and could also be without Matt Smith, Henrique and James Meyer for the match but hopes are held that all could return to the side before the weekend.

Despite the mounting pressure Brisbane and its players have denied anything is wrong whilst Ange Postecoglou seems content to lose until his team is replaced at the top of the table.

"Last time I looked we were still top of the ladder, it can't be crisis point yet," Postecoglou said.

"If people want to think that we're



Odds:
Roar 2.15
Draw 3.40
Mariners 3.46

Head-to-Head: All matches (played 24):
Brisbane Roar wins 12,
Central Coast Mariners wins 3 (9 draws)

Perfect timing for Mariners revenge

losing because we're missing Thomas or Henrique, it doesn't really interest me."

"If we're still level with the Mariners on the weekend or three points ahead, it doesn't really matter, no trophies are handed out in December."

Central Coast on the other hand have only improved in recent weeks, their 4-0 demolition of Adelaide and clinical 2-0 win over arch-rivals Newcastle has highlighted a side that is approaching its peak and is unbeaten in seven matches.

Brisbane, the media darlings for so long, have been replaced at the top

of football discussion with praise for Arnold's side and their exciting style of play.

There has been significant talk about contributions that Mustafa Amini and Bernie Ibini-Isei have made in recent weeks and the two young attackers are integral reasons for why the Mariners could very well be top of the league come late Saturday night.

The club will likely be boosted by reports that a deal is close to being done that would solve the club's financial woes with the FFA reportedly in the final stages of negotiations with a consortium of Russian investors.

Saturday's match will also hold a special significance for defender Pedj Bojic, the 27-year old will make his 100th national league appearance in Australia against the Roar.

Graham Arnold likes to portray his men as battling underdogs but the Mariners are a class side and if they can find a way to break through the mental barrier that appeared to affect them against the Roar earlier this season then it would be no surprise for them to leave Suncorp Stadium with three points.

**Kiss of Death
Roar 2-2 Mariners**



Mariners Line Up

1. Mathew Ryan (gk)
2. Daniel McBreen
3. Joshua Rose
4. Pedj Bojic
6. Patrick Zwaanswijk
7. John Hutchinson
8. Rostyn Griffiths
9. Bernie Ibini
11. Oliver Bozanic
12. Troy Hearfield
14. Michael McGlinchey
16. Trent Sainsbury
18. Alex Wilkinson (c)
19. Matt Simon
20. Justin Pasfield (gk)
22. Mustafa Amini

In: 16. Trent Sainsbury (Promoted)

Out: Nil

Unavailable: Nil



Glory Line Up

1. Danny Vukovic (gk)
 2. Josh Mitchell
 3. Bas van den Brink
 4. Billy Mehmet
 5. Steve Pantelidis
 7. Jacob Burns (c)
 8. Adam Hughes
 9. Shane Smeltz
 10. Liam Miller
 13. Travis Dodd
 14. Steven McGarry
 15. Tommy Amphlett
 17. Todd Howarth
 18. Jesse Makarounas
 19. Josh Risdon
 21. Mile Sterjovski
 22. Adam Taggart
 25. Trent McClenahan
 27. Andrezinho
 30. Lewis Italiano (gk)
- * five to be omitted*

In: Travis Dodd (return from injury), Steven McGarry (promoted), Jesse Makarounas (promoted), Josh Risdon (promoted), Adam Taggart (promoted)

Out: Nil

Unavailable: Chris Coyne (Achilles - 3 months), Victor Sikora (hip - long term injury list), Scott Neville (knee), Evan Berger (hamstring - 3-weeks), Neil Young (abdominal)

Perth Glory v Melbourne Heart

Sat 17 Dec nib Stadium 10:00pm

By Jacob Kagi

Melbourne Heart will be looking to continue their vastly improved form when they go on the road to face the struggling Perth Glory at nib Stadium on Saturday.

The Heart have won four of their past five games, including a 2-1 victory at defending champions Brisbane last weekend, to climb to third spot despite an indifferent start to the season.

That win against the Roar, which was the first time they'd lost in Brisbane in more than a year, will have Melbourne heading to Perth full of confidence.

And while Heart coach John van't Schip was proud of the way his side performed against Brisbane, he said his side had to stay focused on the hard work it still had to do to consolidate a spot in the top six.

"There's no reason to start celebrating ... we've seen how close all the teams are," he said.

"We have to be sharp, we have to be humble, we have to work hard on the training pitch and keep on doing the things that we believe in and work on." But van't Schip's side's results of late have been admirable, with the only slip-up coming against the in-form Mariners, and Perth's defence will face a test against a side which has scored more goals than any side outside of the top two.

The Glory under the match under huge amounts of pressure, having taken just



Heart aim for road trip trifecta

Head-to-Head:
All matches (played 4):
Perth Glory wins 1,
Melbourne Heart wins 0
(3 draws)

Odds:
Glory 2.30
Draw 3.30
Heart 2.95

Radio broadcaster: SportFM 91.3

four points from their past seven games, and failure to win would put Ian Ferguson's future in serious jeopardy.

Club owner Tony Sage has made his Asian Champions League ambitions clear, but a loss would most likely see his side slip out of the top six.

But Perth goalkeeper Danny Vukovic was adamant the team's poor results weren't a true reflection of their recent performances.

"I think the performances mostly have been very good but the results probably haven't gone our way at times," he said.

"That scrutiny you get as a coach when

you're not winning games is part of football.

"But we as a playing group want to win every game and want to win every game for him (Ferguson)."

Perth's hopes of breaking their poor run were boosted by the news Vukovic escaped serious injury in an incident late in last week's 1-0 loss to Wellington Phoenix and will be available for the match.

Winger Travis Dodd is also set to return from a hamstring injury after featuring in the National Youth League last weekend, but it is more likely he will start on the bench.

Dodd's presence should help to spark a Glory attack which has been held scoreless in four of their past six games and has scored just nine goals all season, second fewest in the league.

The Heart will be without influential midfielder Jonatan Germano, who suffered a hamstring injury against Brisbane and was ruled out for a fortnight, with former Perth player Wayne Srhoj a chance to replace him.

**Kiss of Death
Glory 0-2 Heart**

MELBOURNE
HEART



Heart Line Up

1. Clint Bolton (gk)
 2. Michael Marrone
 3. Brendan Hamill
 4. Simon Colosimo
 5. Fred (C)
 6. Matt Thompson
 7. Rutger Worm
 9. Maycon
 10. Wayne Srhoj
 11. Alex Terra
 15. David Williams
 16. Aziz Behich
 17. Jason Hoffman
 18. Curtis Good
 19. Eli Babalj
 23. Mate Dugandzic
 25. Adrian Madaschi
 30. Sebastian Mattei (gk)
- *three to be omitted*

In: Simon Colosimo (returns from injury), Alex Terra (promoted), David Williams (promoted)

Out: Jonatan Germano (injured)

Unavailable: Jonatan Germano (hamstring - two weeks), Nick Kalmar (back - four weeks), Kliment Taseski (fractured foot - indefinite)

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Victory Line Up

2.Matthew Foschini
3.Fabio
4.Petar Franjic
6.Leigh Broxham
7.Matthew Kemp
8.Grant Brebner
9.Jean Carlos Solorzano
10.Archie Thompson
11.Marco Rojas
12.Rodrigo Vargas
13.Diogo Ferreira
14.Billy Celeski
15.Tom Pondeljak
16.Carlos Hernandez
17, Jimmy Jeggo
18.Danny Allsopp
19.Isaka Cernak
20.Lawrence Thomas (gk)
21.Ante Covic (gk)
22.Harry Kewell
23.Adrian Leijer (c)
six to be omitted

In: Rodrigo Vargas (returns from suspension)

Out: Nil

Unavailable: Tando Velaphi (stress fracture).

Melb Victory v Wellington Phoenix

By John Clark

The Wellington Phoenix travel to Melbourne this Sunday, looking to continue an impressive run of form that has seen them skyrocket into the top four.

A little over a month ago the Phoenix shared the foot of the table with Gold Coast, but the return of their influential front man, Paul Ifill, has seen the Phoenix string together a fantastic run of results culminating in Wednesday's 2-0 win over champions Brisbane Roar.

On that occasion it was once again Ifill who sparked the home side into action after they had looked flat up until his goal. He was able to turn Matt Jurman inside out before firing a shot past the hapless Michael Theoklitos. Nicky Ward made sure of the victory with 10 minutes remaining as he coolly slotted it past Theoklitos after that man Ifill had played him in.

Unfortunately for the Phoenix, Ifill was a late substitute with Ricki Herbert conceding post game that he was 'touch and go' to play this Sunday.

The Melbourne Victory, who has quickly become the A-League's draw specialists, once again found a way to share the points with Adelaide United last weekend. The Victory finished a dull first half with all the momentum after Kewell's attempted chip of Eugene Galekovic was palmed just



Radio broadcaster: 774 ABC Melbourne / 1116 SEN Melbourne

Odds:
Victory 1.71
Draw 3.50
Phoenix 4.75

Victory aim to clip Phoenix wings

Head-to-Head
All matches (played 13):
Melbourne Victory wins 5,
Wellington Phoenix wins 2
(6 draws)

wide by the scrambling goalkeeper and they continued that run into the second half with the ever present Archie Thompson nodding home a pin point cross from Fabio.

However with only ten minutes left the Reds squared the ledger with lax defending by the Victory allowing acres of space for Fabian Barbiero to have a ping from outside the box. The players inability to hold on to a lead at home would be of major concern to Mehmet Durakovic although he might be thankful that the Victory don't play another game at Etihad Stadium this season after their five

outing at the venue ended with five draws.

The last time these sides met the Victory came away with their first win of the season. After barely hanging on the entire first half, Melbourne somehow found themselves in front thanks to the brilliance of Archie Thompson. In the second half the Victory played some of their better football for the season and were rewarded when Archie Thompson was dragged down when in on goal. Carlos Hernandez converted the penalty and Ben Sigmund was given an early shower. Dani Sanchez pulled one back late

on for the visitors but it was only a consolation as the Victory finally got their campaign under way.

Three major concerns for Ricki Herbert's men would be the fitness of Ifill, the short turnaround between games and their appalling away form having not registered a win away this season. These three factors means the ball is well and truly in the Victory's court, whether or not they're strong enough to take the chance remains to be seen.

**Kiss of Death
Victory 2-1 Phoenix**



Phoenix Line Up

1. Mark Paston (gk)
2. Manny Muscat
4. Brent Griffiths
6. Tim Brown
7. Leo Bertos
9. Chris Greenacre
11. Daniel
12. Nicky Ward
14. Mirjan Pavlovic
15. Cameron Lindsay
17. Vince Lia
18. Ben Sigmund
20. Tony Warner (gkl)
21. Dani Sanchez
22. Andrew Durante (C)
24. Alex Smith

one to be omitted

In: Dani Sanchez (returns from injury), Mirjan Pavlovic (returns from suspension)...

Out: Paul Ifill (groin injury 2-3 weeks).

Unavailable: Lucas Pantelis (knee injury - indefinite), Jimmy Downey (knee injury – 1 to 2 weeks), Tony Lochhead (groin injury 2 to 3 weeks).



Rewind



Robert Di Fabio

Football can certainly be an unpredictable game, with unforeseen results paving the way for the underdog to prevail.

On this occasion, week 10 of the A-League exemplified why the competition is on such an even playing field. Punters, in conjunction with the football community were scratching their heads when Brisbane Roar was inflicted with its third successive defeat – an uncanny sentiment a fortnight ago – courtesy of a rejuvenated Melbourne Heart and Wellington Phoenix outfit, with the latter playing host to the defending champions in a mid-week fixture.

Meanwhile, Central Coast Mariners continued its imposing display of football, now equal on points with the Roar at the top of the table. Melbourne Victory continued its unsettling start to the campaign, yielding another lead to share the spoils with an uninspiring Adelaide United, while Sydney FC picked up its first point at Surfers Paradise with a scoreless draw against Gold Coast United.

Furthermore, on the local front, South Melbourne unveiled its refurbished arena, with a friendly against old foe Sydney Olympic at the Lakeside Stadium.

Evenness amongst the competition

Constituents akin to salary cap constraints and limitations within squad-size allowances harness the playing field to rather similar propitiations – in contrast to the many leagues abroad, where there are the powerhouse clubs striving for the championship, the teams who are content with finishing anywhere from outside the top four or five to mid-table and the battlers who strive to avoid relegation in order to fight for another year.

The A-League is a rather unique competition, where every outfit, to a degree, has a realistic chance of claiming silverware in any given season. Reminiscent of the Major League Soccer (MLS) competition in the United States and the other football codes on Australian soil, salary cap restrictions are part and parcel of why the A-League has been a strewed success in its preliminary stages on the pitch. With the addition of the finals series, it allows fans to dream, and rationally believe it can encompass a shot at glory, despite its position on the table.

Currently, Australia's premier football competition is arguably the closest it has been since its initiation little over six year ago. After 10 weeks, only 10 points separates joint leaders Brisbane Roar and Central Coast Mariners – on 20 points apiece – from struggler Adelaide United, in ninth place, on 10 points.

With little separating the elite from the cellar dwellers, Melbourne Heart has illustrated how an outburst of posi-



Bookies have stopped taking punts to see how long the new track at Lakeside will survive before the first flare hits the tarmac...

tive results – sitting third on the table with four victories from its last five outings – can overturn the outlook of their season.

Even the mighty Brisbane Roar appear susceptible, once the A-League front-runners – going on a 36-game unbeaten run, eclipsing a 74-year old record held by the Eastern Suburbs rugby league club from the 1930's – have hit

a hurdle in recent weeks, losing its past three fixtures.

The moral of the story: acquire a promising run of form; reap the results, gain some morale and your team may just be in line for a shot at silverware. It may sound like a simple assignment; conversely it is one that is achievable.

Brisbane Roar suffers third successive defeat

After breaking the record for most consecutive game undefeated in Australian professional sport, Brisbane Roar's imposing 15-month scamper has been turned on its head, with defeats at the hands of Sydney FC, Melbourne Heart and Wellington Phoenix over a 10-day period.

Incredibly, it was the first time since January 2010 that Brisbane has suffered a loss on its home turf. Although, it would be folly to undermine the powers of Ange Postecoglou's troops, who have surrendered its advantage as the A-League front-runners, amid the Mariners swooping at their misfortune, picking up six points in its last two outings.

The Roar has illustrated an astute temperament within the playing group and its cohesive nature inundated throughout the playing squad. The football ethos utilised by Brisbane is still the best we've seen throughout the A-League, and most probably in the history of football on Australian soil.

Despite Central Coast's strewed form – 19 points from a possible 21 in its last seven games – Postecoglou's Brisbane side are still the team to beat and the benchmark team's look to immolate.

Unveiling of South Melbourne's Lakeside Stadium

To celebrate the redevelopment of South Melbourne's Lakeside Stadium, the former National Soccer League champions played host to an erstwhile NSL rival and New South

Wales Premier League affiliate Sydney Olympic last Sunday.

A healthy, vibrant crowd of around 4,000 witnessed an entertaining spectacle, where the visitors grasped the bragging rights with a 3-2 triumph.

The \$60 million state of the art configuration is shared by Athletics Australia and South Melbourne, which features two grand stands – seating approximately 8,000 fans with a capacity of around 15,000 when including standing room. The new arena also attributes a brand new electronic scoreboard, floodlights and a refurbishment of the dressing rooms.

The boutique stadium adds another dimension to the football landscape in Melbourne, located in a beautiful location – on the cusp of the Albert Park Lake with a stunning outlook on the city – it garners another alternative for football in Australia.

An intimate atmosphere, ideal for a smaller, but enthusiastic crowd, the Lakeside Stadium could possibly play host to A-League fixtures in the future – whether it's for a community round, a possible option due to other stadium demands or pre-season matches. Whilst AAMI Park is a fabulous amphitheatre for football, South Melbourne's Lakeside Stadium adds another attractive dimension to football in Victoria.

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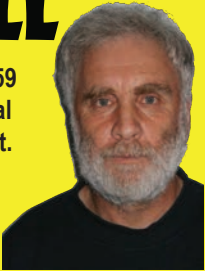
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with Roger Sleeman

Cameras Offside
As we approach Round 11 of the A-League, I'm wondering if anybody has told the Fox Sports broadcast directors that replaying offside incidents in front of the ball makes it very difficult to conclude whether players are offside.

I don't know how the commentators are tolerating this situation if they can't make an offside call when play is in progress.

So let's get serious and instruct the camera staff to get in line with the last defender, just like the assistant referees do, and replay the offside decisions so the viewers see the correct angles.

Sydney FC Football Director
The appointment of Gary Cole as the new Director of Football at Sydney

FC has been generally well received but it's hard to accept the opinion expressed by a staff writer in Four Four Two that Cole's selection will alienate Sydney FC supporters just because he was Operations Manager at their biggest rival, Melbourne Victory.

There is some relevance in the criticism made by Mike Cockerill in the Sydney Morning Herald regarding Cole's share of responsibility for poor signings and the loss of some younger players who should've been retained at the Victory.

However, it's a whole new ball game now and Cole should be given every chance to take Sydney FC to a new level.

Tragically, it's the story of football in Australia that other unsuccessful candidates like Dave Mitchell and Kimon

Taliadoros who have such vast experience can't find jobs.

Surely, we can't afford to lose people like this from our game which leads me to the comment below .

Asian Cup CEO
The appointment of Michael Brown, the former Cricket Australia General Manager, to the post of CEO of the Asian Cup 2015 Organising Committee was interesting.

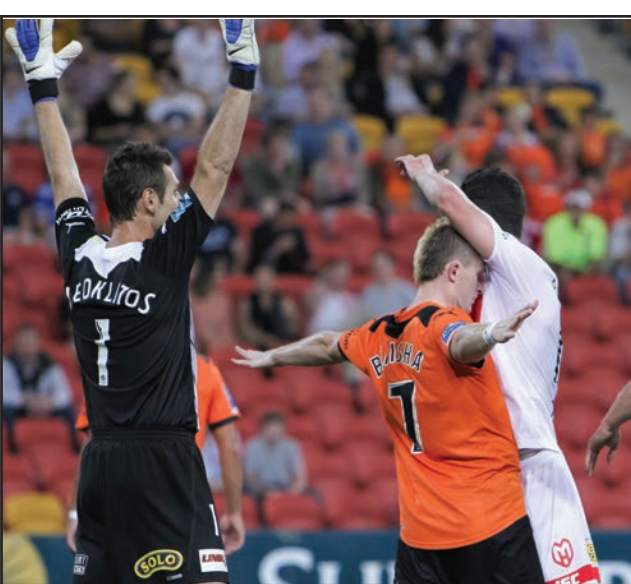
Brown has an impressive CV but it begs the question; weren't there people with football expertise who could've been considered for the role?

Since its inception the FFA has recruited key personnel from other sports because there was a perception that people who had been round too long in the game had become devoid of new ideas.

This policy is difficult to understand when they're many individuals with great football and business backgrounds who would like to work in our game.

Certainly, the other codes don't employ football people and don't do us any favours so why should we always appear to be righteous and accommodate them.

Remember the treatment, Andrew Demetriou, the AFL boss, dished out to football when the World Cup bid was



Get a whiff of this: Losses are just like buses for the Roar.... You don't see any for ages, then all of a sudden they all turn up at once.

in progress.

It will be significant to see how many football people Mr. Brown will appoint to his committee and also employ for the Asian Cup.

Macedonian Experience
I was informed a few days ago that a promoter wanted to bring the

Macedonian national team to Australia for two matches in February or March.

After a number of phone calls requesting a meeting with FFA officials, the promoter received a communication one month later that the proposed matches couldn't be fitted in with the FIFA international designated calen-

dar.

The promoter, a former NSW State League player, was disappointed because he believed the proposal needed to be discussed in detail. He intends now to approach some Asian countries and promote a tournament.

Stop Press Brisbane
Three losses in a row for Brisbane and they appear to be shadow of the team which created the 36 game record.

There isn't the same movement and their game is much slower, particularly due to overlapping fullbacks Franovic and Stefanutto not venturing forward as much to create width.

Admittedly, they are missing the influence of Broich and the mobility of Enrique but a team just can't alter its style this much in only three weeks.

Obviously, the big test is against the Mariners this weekend and the big question is whether Ange Postecoglou can reinvigorate his players to once again produce that fluent brand of football they have demonstrated in the last two seasons.

BOOK REVIEW

BY PAUL MAVROUDIS

There are plenty of people out there who will tell you that sport and politics should not mix. And yet throughout John Maynard's *The Aboriginal Soccer Tribe: A History of Aboriginal Involvement with the World Game* (Magabala Books), for many of the Aborigines involved in soccer, the two are impossible to separate.

Make no bones about it, Soccer Tribe is an important book. In large part this is because it seeks to cover new ground in an uncharted part of our soccer history, and attempts to link the game to the broader Indigenous struggle for social justice. Soccer Tribe's best sections are those which merge the personal with the political, recounting the important players of the past, and the social and political obstacles still in place preventing more Indigenous Australians from taking up the game.

In the 1950s, when Charles Perkins, John Moriarty and Gordon Briscoe emerge on the Australian soccer scene, Maynard showcases the role that soccer played in this trio's overcoming of social disadvantage and their subsequent entry into the political and public sphere. The self-esteem gained from their success in the game, and their treatment as equals by the Continental European migrants who had come to dominate Australia soccer by the early 1950s was crucial to their

political awakening. The late Perkins recalled that soccer: "brought me into the migrant community where I found great satisfaction, no prejudice, no history of bad relations, no embarrassing comments or derogatory remarks, they welcomed me into the fold and I've been there ever since"

Also crucial to their political awakening was that all three travelled to Europe to try their hand at soccer careers. Most Australian soccer fans would be aware only of Joe Marston and his appearance for Preston North End in the 1954 FA Cup final. But Moriarty, Briscoe and Perkins were just as pioneering in their endeavours, though they mostly played for high ranking amateur clubs. There too, they found an acceptance among the English that was wanting in Australia.

Harry Williams, the first Indigenous player to play for the national team, also gets his due recognition. A powerful advertisement for what soccer can do for Indigenous people, Williams was part of the groundbreaking 1974 World Cup squad. As Aboriginal activist Warren Mundine noted on watching Williams play in that tournament, 'with his big afro hair, he was a big inspiration to us all, because in those days only a handful of us played the game'. Maynard also dedicates several sections to current and future Aboriginal stars of the game. This is one area

where some may consider Soccer Tribe to have slipped – and it's a somewhat inevitable failing in a book seeking to celebrate Indigenous achievements in soccer – as Maynard is prone to over-hyping the talents and potential of several contemporary players. Some readers may query the merits of some of Maynard's appraisals.

One of the most pleasing aspects of the book is the significant section on Aboriginal involvement in women's soccer. Though several of the player profiles are short, those that do go into more depth provide stories equally as gripping as those of their male counterparts.

The story of Karen Menzies in particular is moving. Taken from her mother as an infant, raised as a 'white' child without any knowledge of her Indigenous background, breaking through

barriers that female athletes have always faced in pursuing male dominated sports, and being openly gay to boot, Menzies reached the heights of playing for the Matildas. Sadly, her involvement in the game stopped when she became faced with further discrimination when she sought to a high profile assistant coaching role. More reassuring is that there were and are still Indigenous women who have followed in her footsteps towards



playing for the Matildas, such as Kyah Simpson and Lydia Williams. Maynard also covers the problem of getting more Indigenous Australians into the game. Soccer in Australia, apart from the notable exception of Newcastle and the Hunter Valley, is a sport whose heartland is based in the large metropolitan centres. To counter the appeal of rugby league and Australian rules in particular, who have such a healthy

engagement with regional Australia, and thus with Indigenous people, the game must make a concerted and committed effort to promoting the game outside the major cities. In addition, Indigenous soccer players need to be better utilised in promoting the game, and showcasing the huge opportunities there within it. As with all codes, emphasis is also placed on the particular needs of Aboriginal players, especially those from remote communities and the problems of homesickness.

While all those points are crucial, occasionally Maynard also neglects to provide the wider context of a given situation. While being an Aboriginal soccer player from a rural area such as the Sunraysia region is not easy, especially with regards to the huge distance from the game's metropolitan strongholds and higher standards of competition, these same problems also exist for non-Aboriginal soccer participants, albeit obviously not to the same extent.

Likewise, the lack of primary accounts in some sections also creates a jarring effect when put up against those parts of the book where participants and their families are interviewed by Maynard. When relating the story of Mildura United, and Chris Tsivoglou's noble attempt to provide opportunities for Indigenous youth from the surrounding missions, Maynard relies on reports from the Koori Mail and Sydney Morning Herald, thus denying people like Tsivoglou and his charges

from providing more in depth analysis of the wider Mildura soccer scene.

One other issue pops up repeatedly in Soccer Tribe – the lack of a binding narrative. Given the history of Indigenous Australians since European settlement, this is easily understandable, to the point where this lack of narrative becomes a key part of the narrative in itself.

To illustrate this point, Maynard uses the story of Bondi Neal, a star goalkeeper who played for several clubs around Newcastle and the Hunter Valley in the early 1900s. Despite several reports on his goalkeeping prowess in contemporary newspaper accounts, there are scarce details of his origins – and after the passing of stricter laws controlling Aborigines circa 1910, Neal disappears entirely from the public record, along with any known Indigenous participation in soccer.

Soccer Tribe's main flaw is almost an inevitable one – in the past, so little effort has been put into compiling work on the past, present and future of Aboriginal soccer, that it is difficult to know where to begin. Maynard opts to go for a sort of sprawl, trying to cover as much content as possible. Nevertheless, it is still a satisfying and intriguing starting point for coverage into the Indigenous soccer experience, and a worthwhile addition to the collections of Australian soccer aficionados. Hopefully it contributes to being a launching pad for more investigation into Aboriginal soccer.

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NEWCASTLE UTD JETS



PHOTO: BEN NEVILLE

Back Row: Ruben Zadkovich, Jacob Pepper, Labinot Haliti, Kasey Wehrman, Sam Gallaway, Byun Sung-Hwan, Ali Abbas.

Middle Row: Mario Simic, Taylor Regan, Nikolai Topor-Stanley, Matthew Nash, Ben Kennedy, Tiago Calvano, Jeremy Brockie, Marko Jesic.

Front Row: Ben Kantarovski, Chris Payne, James Virgili, Gary Van Egmond (Coach), Jobe Wheelhouse (c), Craig Deans (Assistant Coach), Tarek Elrich, Francis Jeffers, Ryan Griffiths.

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Sydney Olympic displayed impressive football befitting of their NSW champions title.



Football finally returns to Lakeside

Football finally returned to Lakeside Stadium last Sunday afternoon when South Melbourne FC were defeated 3-2 by New South Wales Premier League champions Sydney Olympic in an exhibition match in front of over 4,000 spectators. Whilst the final result was disappointing, the more important aspect of the day was showcasing the new facilities and all aspects of the Club to supporters and the wider Victorian football community.

Coach Peter Tsolakis could not have wished for a better start when the home side went 1-0 up in the first 32 seconds of the game through a wonderfully taken shot by Jason Trifiro on his debut for the Club. Fellow debutant Trent Rixon almost put South 2-0 up after being sent through on goal but he put his shot narrowly wide of the target. Olympic equalised on 22 minutes following some good lead-up play on the left side which culminated in the ball being cut-back for a tap-in. Olympic then took the lead on 32 minutes with a header from a corner. In the second half, Rixon scored past Olympic goalkeeper Paul Henderson scoring his first goal for South before Olympic won the match on 78 minutes following a well-taken free kick from just outside the area.

The result was not ideal but it was highly ironic for two reasons. The first reason was that Sydney Olympic had failed to defeat South in many contests between the two sides over the years at Lakeside Stadium. The second reason was that in the first ever match played at Lakeside (on 26 November 1995) Frank Arok's South Melbourne side also lost 3-2, on that occasion to West Adelaide Hellas. Coach Tsolakis would not have been worried about the result as the side performed well despite not having had many training sessions together as a squad prior to the game. In addition, senior players such as Fernando De Moraes, Rhodri Payne and Marinos Gasparis did not play, with many younger players including goalkeeper George Malliaras being given the opportunity to showcase their talent. The players will now rest over Christmas and the New Year and will begin pre-season training early in 2012.

Words courtesy SMFC
Photos: ANITA MILAS

Clash of the Titans



SMFC stalwart George Donikian MC's the afternoon's celebrations.



The view of Lakeside Stadium from opposite the main stand.



Scotland clinch All Nations Cup honours

By Norm Edgar

The final of the 2011 All Nations Tournament after six weeks of competition was a tight affair with commitment from both sides and bit of controversy to spice the game.

Scotland for the most part dominated the first half with only sporadic attacks from Australia. Shane Tagliaferro in the Scots midfield and John Cummins and Craig Elvin in the defence ensured that Australia had very limited opportunities.

Shane Tagliaferro for Scotland tried his luck early having received a pass from Steve Weir but his shot went just wide of the right post. Scotland continued to have possession and most of the half was played in the Australian half of the pitch. Scotland through Luke Sherbon tried a header from right in front but somehow missed the target followed by another header from John Little which also came to nothing.

Towards the end of the half Aus-

tralia came back into the game and Chas Di Petta and Aleksander Pavasovic combined for the latter to shoot over the bar. Sasa Vranesovic for Australia was probing away but was not able to make much impression.

The controversy came in the 40th minute when Scotland found themselves down to ten men when Luke Sherbon was sent off by the referee for what could have only been serious case of dissent and with still over half the game to play.

However Scotland did not let this deter them and right on half time they took the lead when Australia lost possession of the ball on the left flank in their half of the pitch near the half way line. The ball was swiftly played to Shane Tagliaferro whose shot took a deflection and gave Nicholas Abougelis in the Australian goal no chance.

The second half with Scotland a man down and trying to maintain their lead and Australia showing more determination, the Australian

team were able to set up more attacks. Aleksaander Pavasovic was the first to try his luck with a determined run and shot which sailed wide. Next Sasa Vranesovic for Australia shot over the bar after good lead up play by Murat Kaliskan and Dejan Erakovic. Erakovic followed up with another shot soon after. Scotland were able to get out of their half occasionally and had a few opportunities including a free kick just outside the penalty area but Wayne Gordon's shot hit the

Australian wall and came to nothing. Australia did hit the post twice in quick succession during one attack but with time running out and both teams tiring chances became fewer.

In the end the Scotland defence held firm and the score remained 1-0 and a win to Scotland for their third win in the last eight years and fourth overall.

A notable achievement in this tournament was that Scotland did not have a goal scored against them.



Australian goalkeeper, Nick Abougelis, punches the ball away from Luke Sherbon.



Australian defender, Mickey Lunt, is tackled by Scott Webster.



Slaven Vranesovic (Australia) puts his head on the line as Shane Tagliaferro (Scotland) gets his kick.



Captain, Stuart Webster, proudly holds the All Nations Cup aloft after Scotland completed the tournament without conceding a goal.

Couch Potato Dept.
* ALL TIMES ARE AEDT



SBS ONE
Sunday December 18th
10:30 AM UEFA Europa League Highlights
11:00 AM Les Murray's Football Feature - FIFA Club World Cup 2011 highlights: Semi-finals.
12:00 PM FIFA Futbol Mundial

Monday December 19th
04:30 PM FIFA Futbol Mundial
11:30 PM The World Game

SBS TWO
Monday December 5th
9:30 PM The World Game



Saturday 17-Dec
Bundesliga Round 17 Bayern Munich v Cologne 9:00am 1st Airing
Scottish Premier League Round 19 Aberdeen v Hibernian 11:25pm LIVE

Sunday 18-Dec
Scottish Premier League Round 19 Hearts v Dunfermline 1:55am LIVE
Ligue 1 Round 18 Lyon v Evian 6:55am LIVE
Bundesliga Round 17 Schalke v Werder Bremen 9:00am 1st Airing
Ligue 1 Round 18 Marseille v Lorient 8:15pm 1st Airing

Monday 19-Dec
Ligue 1 Round 18 PSG v Lille 6:55am LIVE
Bundesliga Round 17 Kaiserslautern v Hannover 9:00am 1st Airing
Ligue 1 Round 18 Bordeaux v Sochaux 12:30pm 1st Airing
Eredivisie Round 17 Feyenoord v Twente 2:15pm 1st Airing
Eredivisie Round 17 Ajax v Den Haag 4:00pm 1st Airing
Bundesliga Round 17 Monchengladbach v Mainz 5:45pm 1st Airing

Tuesday 20-Dec
Eredivisie Round 17 NAC Breda v AZ 3:15am 1st Airing
Blue Square Premier Round 25 York v Kidderminster 6:30am LIVE

Wednesday 21-Dec
Ligue 1 Round 19 Nancy v Marseille 6:55am LIVE

Thursday 22-Dec
Ligue 1 Round 19 Teams TBC 4:55am LIVE
Ligue 1 Round 19 St Etienne v PSG 6:55am LIVE



Saturday 17th December
01:30 pm The Serie A Highlights Show

Sunday 18th December
03:30 am Bundesliga Weekly Highlights

Monday 19th December
03:30 am Magic Of The FA Cup West Ham's Greatest Players

Tuesday 20th December
03:00 am Manchester City V Arsenal
06:00 am Bundesliga Weekly Highlights
07:00 am The Serie A Highlights Show

Wednesday 21st December
03:00 am Bundesliga Matchday 16: Werder Bremen V Wolfsburg
05:00 am 500 Great Goals
05:30 am FA Cup Classics F.A. Cup Final 1996/97 Chelsea V Middlesbrough
06:00 am Serie A Matchday 16
08:00 am The Serie A Highlights Show

Thursday 22nd December
02:30 am Bundesliga Freiburg V B Dortmund
04:30 am Bundesliga Weekly Highlights
05:30 am FA Cup Classics F.A. Cup 3rd Round 1999/00 Hull City V Chelsea



ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE LIVE
Times listed are 7 minutes prior to kick-offs.

Table with 3 columns: Date, Match, Time. Rows include Newcastle v Swansea, Blackburn v West Brom, Everton v Norwich, Fulham v Bolton, Wolves v Stoke, Wigan v Chelsea, QPR v Man Utd, Aston Villa v Liverpool, Tottenham v S'land, Man City v Arsenal.

ENGLISH FOOTBALL LEAGUE LIVE
Sun Dec 18 L1: MK Dons v Preston 4:00 am
Sun Dec 18 P'mouth v Southampton 11:56 pm
Tue Dec 20 C Palace v Birmingham 6:30 am

A-LEAGUE LIVE
Fri Dec 16 Adelaide v Gold Coast 7:30 pm
Sat Dec 17 Newcastle v Sydney 5:00 pm
Sat Dec 17 Brisbane v Central Coast 7:30 pm
Sat Dec 17 Perth v Melb Heart 10:00 pm
Sun Dec 18 Victory v Phoenix 4:30 pm

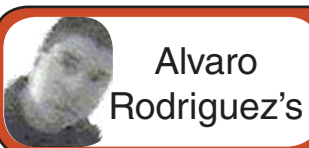


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Every Tuesday 7pm

Extra Time Magazine Show
Every Tuesday 7.30pm

SMFC TV
Channel 31
Every Wed 7pm

The Green Gully Football Show
Every Saturday 10.30am



Alvaro Rodriguez's

NAME: Vietnam
CAPITAL: Hanoi
POPULATION: (2011 approx.) 90,549,390
CONFEDERATION: AFC
INTERNATIONAL HONOURS: ASEAN Championship winners 2008, runners-up 1998; South-East Asian Games gold-medalists 1959*, runners-up 1967*, 1973*, 1995, 1999
ASIAN CUP APPEARANCES: 1956*, 1960*, 2007(co-hosts) *[denotes South Vietnam]
FIFA WORLD RANKING: 134th

WHO ARE YA?

The Socialist Republic of Vietnam is located in South-East Asia, facing the South China Sea and bordered by Cambodia, Laos and China. The history of this exotic land goes back some 4000 years, but it was not till 2897 BC that the Hung Vuong royal dynasty was established, transforming what had earlier been a simple agrarian society into a powerful kingdom. Their rule came to an end in 257 BC, after which warlords and generals ruthlessly vied for power - a sad end for a period of history that was the source for many of Vietnam's folk myths and legends. Sadder still was the loss of sovereignty to the Han Chinese Empire a century later, and the next thousand years would be spent fighting to free the land from the Chinese yoke, with varying degrees of success.

Towards the 1st millenium's end the nation regained sovereignty, and its influence and culture flourished. Royal rulers came, went and/or were overthrown for most of the next 800 years until the French annexed the region and incorporated it into their wider 'Indochina' dominion in the late 1800s. With the onset of World War II and colonial motherland France at the whim of Nazi Germany and her Japanese allies, Vietnamese independence movements arose, most notably the Viet Minh - a guerrilla group that ideologically combined Marxist-Leninist and Vietnamese nationalist doctrine, led by Ho Chi Minh.

Upon the war's end, the Viet Minh laid claim to power, establishing the Democratic Republic of Vietnam - but the French were not to be cowed, and so ensued a bloody guerrilla war across all of Indochina; the French aiming to reassert their control of the region but it was not to be. The conflict ended in 1954 with most of the region's current borders laid down, except for Vietnam - the Geneva Conference of that year divided the country, Korea/Germany-style, into 2 separate nations: North Vietnam, a Communist state led by Ho

Planet Football
No.187 Vietnam



Doddsy at full throttle vs. Vietnamese champs Dong Tam in the 2007 ACL

Chi Minh and South Vietnam, a 'capitalist liberal democracy', backed by the West, with its capital in the southern city of Saigon.

South Vietnam was no democracy however, with its president Ngo Dinh Diem seen by detractors as a right-wing stooge of the Western powers, and ruling the country with an iron-fisted hatred of leftist ideas.

As it was, his assassination in 1963 sparked into brutal life the conflict which will seemingly be synonymous with the Vietnamese nation forever - the civil war between the North and South Vietnamese nations, both prodded on by their respective ideological masters: the Soviets and the Americans, with the active military involvement of the latter casting a dark shadow over America itself, coinciding as it did with a sweeping period of social change there. But in 1975, what had been written off by so many as the mere dreams of peasant armies (both the North Vietnamese Army and their southern guerrilla allies the Viet Cong) against the might of American military power happened - the South fell, America withdrew from battle wounded, and the country was reunified under Northern control - Ho Chi Minh's greatest triumph even in death.

Symbolically, Saigon was renamed in his honour and the nation was turned into a socialist state; although in the last 20 years it has steered more towards a free-market economy, ideological controls remain considerably tight.

SO WHAT YOU DONE?

Despite football being the No. 1 sport, Vietnam has struggled to challenge Asia's powerhouses, which is understandable given the many decades of socio-political conflict.

During the era of partition, though both

Vietnams fielded national teams, neither was very successful at all and indeed the North made a point of playing mostly against fellow socialist states. The South did qualify for the 1956 and 1960 Asian Cups, finishing 4th on both occasions - still Vietnam's best performance in continental competition. In 1967 the South hosted the Vietnam National Day Tournament, won by Johnny Warren's Socceroos - Australia's first-ever international footballing silverware.

The South only attempted World Cup qualification once, for West Germany '74 but were brushed aside by Japan and Hong Kong; thus their only successes were gold and silver medals in the football tournament of the South-East Asian Games in the 1960s-70s.

Since reunification the country has contested the qualifiers for both Asian and World Cups regularly, but again with no success. The reunified nation's only Asian Cup appearance to date, in 2007 was by virtue of being one of 4 co-hosts! Thus modern-era success has been restricted to the ASEAN Championship (formerly known as the Tiger Cup) and the South-East Asian Games' football event.

BIG CLUBS

Most of the country's existing clubs were founded after the Vietnam War and moreover, club mergers are becoming all too common. In the current V-League (the national league set up in 1980, not to be confused with Victoria's futsal comp!) era, the now-defunct Th Cong/Viettel FC remains the leader with 5 titles, plus 13 North Vietnamese League titles beginning in 1956.

In terms of fan support and/or performances in continental club competition, the biggest clubs are Becamex Binh Duong, Da Nang (recipients of a 15-0

Just in case the GPS isn't working...



hiding by Gamba Osaka in the 2006 Asian Champions League) and Dong Tam - the latter familiar to Adelaide United fans from the 2007 Champions League campaign. Though the sides ground out a 2-all draw in their first group clash in Tan An (capital of Long An province), the Reds - or rather, Travis Dodd - ran riot in the return at Hindmarsh, with Doddsy scoring a hat-trick, all the goals in a comprehensive 3-0 win.

Shortly afterward the AFC stripped Vietnamese clubs of automatic ACL qualification, from then on having to compete in and finish in the top 2 of the AFC Cup (Asia's equivalent of the Europa League) in order to play-off for an ACL spot.

REP YOUR COLORS

The Vietnamese NT wears an all-red strip with either yellow or white trimmings; the away is white inverted with red. This base design was apparently worn by both Vietnams during partition, as the South seemingly did not wear yellow jerseys as per their national flag. But as jerseys go, Dong Tam's kit in the 2007 ACL was as unique as they come - green and white stripes, black shorts and white/red hooped socks (they have since ditched this exotic design for plain red tops and black shorts).

MATCHWINNERS

Striker Lê Công Vinh is the pin-up boy of Vietnamese football, already with 30 goals in 48 caps for the national team, having recently turned 26. He had a loan stint at Portugal's Leixões SC whilst in the Portuguese top-flight in the 2009/10 season, becoming the first Vietnamese to play professionally in Europe; he also got on the scoresheet in a Portuguese Cup match against Casa Pia AC. Despite this, he returned home where he currently turns out for Hanoi FC, with not a single foreign-based player left in the national team.

Before him, Le Huynh Duc was the go-to man of the Vietnamese NT during the '90s, amassing 64 caps and scoring 30 goals - he enjoyed a brief stint at China's Chongqing Lifan in a club career otherwise spent at home, and interestingly a player of Vietnamese roots, Hai Ngoc Tran represented Norway at the 1993 World Youth Cup held here in Australia.

SO WHAT NOW?

The Vietnamese are sadly out of the WC qualifying race, having been eliminated by Qatar over 2 legs back in July for a spot in second-round group E. They will doubtlessly pool their energies towards victory at the 2012 ASEAN tournament as well as the 2015 Asian Cup quals when they commence, but in any case it appears Vietnamese football still has a fair distance to go.

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Micky Petersen

BLAST FROM THE PAST



With Roy Hay

Micky Petersen was one of the best all-round talents in Australian football. He was top class Socceroo midfielder, club champion at South Melbourne, coach of the year in the National Soccer League, developer of a football boot and a great teacher.

His pedigree was good. He was born in Melbourne on 6 May 1965, the son of Dutch star Hans Petersen who played with Hakoah, Wilhelmina and George Cross in the 1960s and for Australia against Heart of Midlothian when they toured in 1959. Mike began as a junior at Port Melbourne, where he was player of the year of the Third Division, and moved to Heidelberg Alexander in 1983. Then thanks to his Dad's connections he had spells with Roda JC and the mighty Ajax in Holland as a teenager.

In 1984 he was transferred to Brunswick Juventus and helped the club to the National Soccer League title in 1985. He scored a critical late goal, assisted by an 'accidental' handball not spotted by the referee, in the Southern Division Grand Final against Preston Makedonia and Robbie Cullen set up Paul Wade for the winner with only five minutes left to play. Laurie Schwab described Juventus as the finest team in 15 years and Petersen was the man of the match in the second leg of the grand final, when Juventus saw off Sydney City Hakoah by one-nil. The Juventus squad included Yakka Banovic, Mehmet Durakovic, John Dowie, Brian Brown, Eddie Campbell, Fabio Incantalupo, Mike Petersen, Richard Miranda, Paul Wade, Robbie Cullen, Joe Sweeney, Paul Drinoczki, Sean Keogh, Andrea Zinni and Rino Minichiello. The coach was John Margaritis.

Brunswick topped the Southern Division ladder in 1986 but lost the preliminary final to JUST. Paul Wade called him 'Micky P' but another nickname 'The Crab', stuck to Petersen for much of his career. Perhaps it was his sometimes angular movements, or his habit of moving from side to side in defence or midfield which attracted the title. The combination with Wade at club and national level was very effective. Wade would do the grunt work and Petersen would find the killer pass to create goals or opportunities for his forwards.

In 1989 Petersen moved to South Melbourne and was a key part of the championship winning team of 1991. He remained at South Melbourne till 1997. For much of the later period injuries

limited his senior playing time but he turned out several times with the youth team and acted as on-field coach to the youngsters, sharing his experience and developing their tactical awareness. The next generation at South were the beneficiaries of his teaching.

He was appointed as assistant coach to Ange Postecoglou in 1997 and hence was a key contributor the club's to back-to-back titles. In 1999 he took over as senior coach at St Albans Dinamo in the Victorian Premier League. In 2000 he was back at South Melbourne as senior coach and led the club to the top of the table by eight clear points and the grand final where Wollongong Wolves with Dean Anastsiadis in goal denied South Melbourne by two goals to one. The goal for the Blues was scored by Dean's brother John, but it was not enough. Petersen was named coach of the year.

Petersen received his first cap for Australia in 1985 against Udinese. He came on as a substitute for Oscar Crino in 78 minutes and scored the winner four minutes later in a two-one defeat of the Italian club in the World Series tournament. He also played against Red Star Belgrade that year and two games against a Chinese select. From 1988 through to 1992 he was a regular in the Socceroo midfield, eventually gaining 50 caps (38 A internationals) and scoring three goals. He helped the Socceroos qualify for the Olympic Games in Seoul in 1988 and played in the upset win over Yugoslavia. In 1991 he played against England and in the President's Cup in South Korea where the host team won on penalties after a scoreless draw in extra-time.

Ange Postecoglou had Micky Petersen as his assistant when the former was coach of the Olyroos and Young Socceroos. Postecoglou pointed out that he and Petersen both played for the Socceroos when they were very young. 'Frank Arok wasn't afraid to play young players,' he said.

Micky Petersen demonstrated another talent when he helped to design the 'Concave' football boot, which was claimed to help prevent metatarsal injuries which had laid low a number of top players in England and Australia. Kenny Dalglish was impressed enough with the boot to become one of its promoters. Petersen was inducted into the Football Federation Australia Hall of Fame in 2005.

Midfield Master



Micky Petersen and Paul Wade chair Frank Farina after the win over Yugoslavia at the Olympic Games in Seoul in 1988. Source: Captain Socceroo: The Paul Wade Story, p. 70.



Micky Petersen lines up a pass for the Socceroos. Photo: Les Shorrock collection, Deakin University Library.



Three Juventus stars, (from left) Mehmet Durakovic, Micky Petersen and goalkeeper Peter Laumets. All three also played with distinction for South Melbourne. Photo: Les Shorrock collection, Deakin University Library.

Heart takes top honours against Roar

By Daniel Quinn

10-man Adelaide Utd defeat Victory
A 10-man Adelaide Utd has defeated Melbourne Victory 2-1 thanks to goals from Cameron Watson and Dion Kirk on Sunday at Kingston Heath Soccer Complex.

Adelaide created the first chance on 3 minutes through Teeboy Kamara but Victory senior keeper Lawrence Thomas saved well.

The host's first chance come on 10 minutes through regular A-Leaguer Marco Rojas but his shot was well saved by Mark Birighitti in goal.

Another senior player Jean Carlos Sorlozano got his chance to impress and shot wide after being played through by Luke O'Dea.

Adelaide however controlled the tempo with Eugenie Levchenko and Cameron Watson in the centre of the park.

Isaka Cernak created the best chance of the half for Rojas as he ran into the box before laying off to Rojas. The lively Rojas however couldn't control the ball.

Not long after the break Thomas impressed to deny Kamara again after being played in by Ricardo Da Silva.

On 58 minutes The Reds opened the scoring after Kamara laid it off for an unmarked Watson to tap home.

One minute later Jimmy Jeggo forced Birighitti into a fantastic save from long range. Jeggo once again tested Birighitti from the resulting corner but the Young Socceroo saved easily.

Only one minute later Adelaide would have to play the last 30 minutes with 10 as Antony Golec was shown a straight red card for denying a goal scoring opportunity.

But soon later Dion Kirk made it 2-0 after tapping home from Kamara's low cross.

On 75 minutes Daniel Chaabani grabbed one back. Paulo Retre put in a great cross which fell for Chaabani who finished nicely.



Heart's Zac Walker continues his hot form in the NYL, this time with a hat-trick against Roar. Photo: JOHN PUNSHON

Kamara could have finished off Victory but his shot was hit directly at Thomas.

Victory pushed numbers forward and Adelaide got numbers back but Sorlozano was still able to shoot from long range on 89 minutes but again Birighitti had good hands.

Adelaide record only their second win of the season with Victory stuck at the bottom.

Melbourne Victory coach Darren Davies believes his side should have got something out of the game. "I think that was a game we shouldn't have lost. All season we have been getting better and better and I think this weekend we should have turned out performance into a result."

Heart comeback miraculously in top of table clash

Melbourne Heart has come from behind to defeat Brisbane Roar 5-2 on Sunday at Cleveland Showgrounds thanks to a hat-trick to Zac Walker.

In terrible conditions Brisbane opened the scoring on 5 minutes after Josh Groenewald's clearance was smashed

into a teammate before finding the net. Only three minutes later Brisbane doubled their lead through Matt Thurtell who fired into the bottom corner from his left foot.

Stipo Andrijasevic had Heart's best chance of the half but Matt Acton saved a good attempt.

It seemed all over at half-time but Heart came out as a new team.

David Williams got one back on 70 minutes before Zac Walker got a quick fire double on 75 and 76 minutes to take the lead.

But Zac Walker wasn't finished as he completed his hat-trick on 85 minutes before Williams got his deserved double three minutes later. It finished 5-2. Melbourne Heart are clear leaders of the table with Roar dropping to third.

A-League experience proves to be vital

An experience Gold Coast Utd outfit has defeated Sydney 3-1 on Saturday at Owen Park.

Gold Coast could have opened the

scoring on 10 minutes but Golgol Mebrahtu's header which clipped the bar before going in was ruled offside. Mebrahtu was denied again three minutes later as another header was flying into the net, offside once again.

However on 17 minutes Mebrahtu did finally open the scoring by sliding a nice finish past Marko Bozic in goal.

Utd's lead only lasted three minutes as Joel Chianese finished easily past Brendan White in goal.

Gold Coast grabbed back the lead on 25 minutes as Kwame Yeboah was found unmarked by Jake Barker-Daish.

Not long before the break Yeboah could have made it 3-1 but was denied brilliantly by Bozic.

White in goal for the hosts proved to be the man in the way for Sydney as Caleb Rufer was denied before Jared Lum was too on 87 minutes.

In second-half injury time Chris Lucas did make it 3-1 to move his side up to sixth with Sydney below them in seventh.

Jets hammer the AIS

Newcastle Jets have hammered the AIS 4-0 at the AIS Athletics Track on Saturday afternoon thanks to a brace from Chris Payne.

Chris Payne opened the scoring in the first minute from the penalty spot.

On 20 minutes Newcastle could have had their second but Jack Green got back to head clear off the line.

AIS could have equalised through Scott Galloway but Jack Duncan made a brilliant save to keep the clean sheet.

On 26 minutes Payne could have extended Newcastle's lead but his point blank shot was hit straight at Paul Izzo in goal.

Payne wasted another chance when his header was again hit directly at Izzo.

But on 34 minutes Payne did grab his second with a simple header with Izzo nowhere to be seen.

Paul Izzo was again then man in the way

for Payne denying a first-half hat-trick with a great save.

Five minutes into the second-half Scott Pettit made it 3-0 with a wonderful curling strike over Izzo.

The AIS immediately attacked through Jakob Williams whose shot was deflected onto the crossbar.

Williams was in it again soon after but his shot was hit directly at Duncan in goal.

However Newcastle made it 4-0 thanks to Kyle Ewart who ran onto a goal kick before finishing past Izzo.

After the win Jets jump to fourth with the AIS dropping to second last with a game in hand.

10-man Glory snatch it late

A late Ndumba Makeche strike has defeated Central Coast Mariners 2-1 on Sunday at 6PR Stadium.

The visitors from Gosford opened the scoring through Mitchell Duke on 11 minutes which didn't give Devon Spence any chance of a save.

However Glory equalised only three minutes later through Ndumba Makeche. Travis Dodd's initial shot was cleared off the line by Nikola Stanojevic before Makeche fired home. It was Dodd's return from a hamstring injury.

Glory could have taken the lead before half-time but Alec Jovic's shot was tipped over by Dylan Mitchell in goal.

A few minutes later Makeche looked to grab his brace but his strike travelled narrowly wide of the post.

Just after the break Justin Hayward ripped open the Glory right wing before Devon Spence was forced into saving his attempt.

On 65 minutes Glory was down to 10 when Sam Mitchinson was given a red card for denying a goal scoring opportunity.

With the man advantage Mariners pushed numbers forward with Kwabena Appiah-Kubi's header being saved by

Heart takes top honours against Roar

By FFA

The Westfield W-League summit remains congested after the top-of-the-table clash between leaders Canberra United and Sydney FC ended in a nail-biting goalless draw.

Third-placed Brisbane Roar saw off Adelaide United 2-0 to go level with Sydney, though trailing on goal difference, with three points separating the top three.

Melbourne Victory are now well placed in fourth as they maintained their recent fine form with a 5-0 rout of Perth Glory.

However, all eyes were on the nation's capital where victory for either team would have been an enormous step towards securing the premiership.

The stalemate leaves Canberra maintaining their three-point buffer and masters of their own destiny, with seven points from their remaining three matches enough to guarantee their maiden crown.

With much on the line a tough and physical contest saw two evenly matched teams battle it out at Deakin Stadium.

After Ashleigh Sykes hit the post in the opening period, the two goalkeepers – Canberra's Lydia Williams and Sydney's Allison Lipsher - were largely inactive, although both needed to make impressive stops when called into action.

The Sky Blues lost Servet Uzunlar after the Matildas defender was issued with a second caution ten minutes from full time, but the visitors nevertheless poured on the pressure in the dying stages.

Sydney had a strong claim for a penalty waived away while Sarah Walsh



Scorer Jodie Taylor (right) and Caitlin Friend share the joy for Victory.

Photo: JOHN PUNSHON

struck a shot into the side netting.

Brisbane Roar made the most of the stalemate by claiming three points with their hard-fought victory over an increasingly stubborn Adelaide side.

The Roar bookended the game with goals from Aivi Luik, her maiden Westfield W-League strike, and also Emily Gielnik with the latter not arriving until deep into added time.

Adelaide defended stoutly and goalkeeper Sian McLaren shone in making a couple of spectacular stops.

It was the latest in a sequence of narrow losses this season which must leave the Lady Reds looking good to break their lengthy winless run against the struggling Perth Glory next weekend at home.

Perth's disastrous week ended in further disappointment with a 5-0 home defeat against Melbourne Victory.

A record losing scoreline against Sydney last weekend was followed by the departure of two of the Glory's imports for disciplinary reasons.

A suspension to the team's third import, Katie Holtham, stretched resources further and it was no surprise when the visitors immediately took charge.

The Victory led by three at the midway point of the first half and only a number of spurned goalscoring opportunities preventing the scoreline from blowing out further.

Victory skipper Jodie Taylor scored a hat-trick – her first in the Westfield W-League – to move to seven goals, behind only Canberra's Michelle Heyman on the goalscorer's leaderboard. Attacking midfield dynamo Katrina Gorry was also on the scoresheet with a double.

The win solidified the Victory's hold on

Results
Melbourne Victory 2 (Jodie Taylor 40, 65) Newcastle Jets 1 (Nicole Bolger 36)
Brisbane Roar 2 (Joanne Burgess 7, Ellie Brush own goal 88) Canberra United 2 (Sally Shipard 9, Michelle Heyman 78)
Sydney FC 11 (Renee Rollason 24, 42, 50, Kylie Ledbrook 47, 78, 87, Tanya Oxtoby 58og, Leena Khamis 59, 60, 75, Kyah Simon 93) Perth Glory 0
Bye: Adelaide United

Standings
P W D L F A D P
1 Canberra United FC 7 5 2 0 15 7 8 17
2 Sydney FC 7 4 2 1 22 5 17 14
3 Brisbane Roar 7 4 2 1 15 9 6 14
4 Melbourne Victory 7 4 0 3 15 6 9 12
5 Newcastle Jets FC 5 2 0 3 9 11 -2 6
6 Perth Glory FC 6 1 0 5 6 27 -21 3
7 Adelaide United FC 7 0 0 7 4 21 -17 0

Next Round
Sat 17 Dec 11 3:00pm Melbourne Victory Vs Brisbane Roar Simonds Stadium, Geelong
Sat 17 Dec 11 5:30pm Adelaide United Vs Perth Glory Hindmarsh Stadium
Sat 18 Dec 11 3:00pm Newcastle Jets Vs Canberra United Adamstown Oval, Newcastle
Sydney FC Vs Bye

fourth leaving them six points clear of Newcastle, although the Jets have two matches in hand.

The world according to Steve Mautone

By Daniel Quinn

STEVE Mautone is a former goalkeeper for English clubs West Ham United and Reading as well as representing South Melbourne and Blacktown City among others in the old NSL. He is now the goalkeeping coach at A-League side Melbourne Victory.

Mautone grew up on a farm in Myrtleford, Victoria where he watched a lot of English football on TV. Back then he got to watch one of his idols, the great Peter Shilton. But his favourite goalkeeper was Italian legend Dino Zoff. The 1982 World Cup winning captain lifted the trophy at 40 years of age.

Mautone liked Zoff for many reasons. "For me he wasn't spectacular. What I liked in him is what I still like about goalkeepers now – he was solid, very precise, very conscientious in everything he did," said Mautone.

"He just seemed to take the game very seriously and was there to work hard to get success."

After graduating through the AIS in 1989 Mautone moved to Blacktown City in the NSL before moving onto Parramatta Eagles but soon after joined Victorian Premier League side Morwell Falcons.

"I had a fantastic time at Morwell Falcons and I really enjoyed my football there," he told GW.

But after two seasons with Morwell he joined Victorian giants South Melbourne before moving onto new NSL side Canberra Cosmos. However, he only stayed there for one season before moving to England and joining EPL side West Ham.

Mautone believes that his time with the Hammers was the best of his career. "Without a doubt my first move to the UK to West Ham probably sticks in my mind as one of my greatest achievements – to get a professional contract coming from a VPL club."

While at West Ham he was able to work alongside one of his idols as Shilton was the goalkeeping coach but also the back-up keeper. But despite the famous England international sitting on 997 first team appearances throughout his lengthy career, it was Mautone who was given the nod to make his debut.

However, Mautone didn't play as often as he would have liked due to Ludek Miklosko being the number one keeper so eventually Mautone was loaned to Reading.

"At West Ham I sat on the bench, then played then found myself back on the bench so I went on loan to Reading then ended up signing with them permanently."

He played 34 games at Reading before he was released due to a knee reconstruction. He went onto play for other UK-based clubs such



Steve Mautone prepares to bring on substitute Paolo Retre, whilst referee Strebre Delovski admires David Beckham's skills during Melbourne Victory's friendly against LA Galaxy last week. Photo: ANITA MILAS

as Wolves, Gillingham and Crystal Palace.

Mautone believes that there is not much difference in goalkeeping standards between England and Australia.

"No, not much at all. As youngsters the Australian goalkeepers are probably better.

"Here in Australia we tend to value the position and really look into the art of goalkeeping while in the UK I don't think they care as much about technique. They are more about if you make the save then you are good enough. That is why Australian goalkeepers have a fairly high success rate."

Injury was the real downer on Mautone's playing career as he endured three reconstructions on his left knee which basically ended his career. And there are times when he wonders what could have been if he was injury-free.

"Those injuries were coming off the back of playing regularly for Reading in the Championship and gaining the attention of EPL clubs. If I was injury-free then it would have been interesting to see where I would have ended up."

Despite his injuries, Mautone believes he achieved so much more than he ever dreamed of because he was a country kid who never thought he would reach the heights that he did.

"In my wildest dreams I'd never thought I would achieve anything in sport so I just cracked on and before I knew it I was playing for Australia at junior level.

"But I never felt that I was as good as the city kids so I had to work harder and that is what gave me a little bit of success. I probably over-achieved in a way though others might see it differently."

In 2005 he joined Melbourne Victory as goalkeeping coach and has had the opportunity to coach Michael Theoklitos, Eugene Galekovic, Mitch Langerak, Glen Moss and now Ante Covic, Tando Velaphi and Lawrence Thomas.

And Mautone is delighted to work in a professional environment at Victory.

"Look it is fantastic to be working in this environment especially as I get to work with the goalkeepers every day. It's not like I come in once or twice a week and I am gone. I get to work with them every day and from a planning point of view, I get to help with the recovery phase of training, the conditioning and the technical and tactical side of their training."

Mautone coached current Brisbane Roar keeper Theoklitos for four seasons from 2005 to 2009 and believed he was one of the most consistent keepers he has worked with.

"He probably was the most consistent goalkeeper that I have

ever worked with and his ability to concentrate through games is fantastic and that's why he is as good a goalkeeper as he is."

Mautone believes that Theoklitos did make the right move back to the A-League after a disastrous spell with Norwich in England.

"At the time I don't think he had much of a choice. He hadn't played for eight months and his career looked like it was going down the drain so he needed to get back his focus and enjoy his football and he is definitely enjoying it now."

Mautone also coached Langerak who grabbed an opportunity with both hands to be number one at Victory after Moss had some inconsistent performances and Mautone rates Langerak as the most promising goalkeeper he has ever coached.

"From day one what I saw in Mitch I hadn't seen in a young goalkeeper before and he was only 17 when we brought him in."

After 21 appearances for Victory Langerak joined German giants Borussia Dortmund. Despite only making one appearance in the Bundesliga in his first season the youngster is happy to wait and to learn.

And Mautone reckons if he is still second choice next season, his third in Germany, then he should look for more game time elsewhere.

"Next season it wouldn't be a disaster if he is still number two. But I would have thought he would look at the possibility of a move then to get some experience. At this stage he is learning and happy to be learning and happy to be number two but he has a lot of time on his hands."

Petkovic joined Victory in 2010 but only played one season before retiring and Mautone offers this view of those events: "Petka (Petkovic) came back and has been a great goalkeeper, but his body was nowhere near what it used to be. He was a little bit unlucky because he copped some criticism which wasn't exactly his fault, but he was probably ready to retire."

Velaphi joined in 2011 as Petkovic's replacement and was set to be number one before fracturing his leg on the eve on the season. Mautone updated us on his recovery.

"Unfortunately Tando's recovery has hit a hiccup. His bones aren't healing as quickly as we were anticipating. He is still positive and he is training with the first team. He's not back in full training but he's doing well and trying to get this injury right to be in the frame for selection."

Due to Velaphi's injury Ante Covic was signed on a one-year deal as his replacement and made an instant impact against Sydney FC on debut with some great saves.

Mautone considers Covic's

experience and attitude to be great attributes.

"Yeah, he is full of experience, he has been at a World Cup, he has played overseas for the majority of his career. I really like Ante's attitude. Not only is he a nice bloke off the field he also is a hard worker. He is a winner – you can see that extra feeling that he has when something isn't right, you can almost read it off his face, you see how much it means to him when we don't win."

Thomas was signed in 2011 as Velaphi's back-up and to develop as a younger keeper. Mautone and Victory think they "snared him from under the noses of Heart". The youngsters was due to train with Melbourne Heart but when he arrived he trained with Victory. When Heart finally called to ask him to train he had already started with Victory.

Thomas's mental toughness gives him an advantage over other young keepers says Mautone.

"Lawrence as a goalkeeper has a long way to go, but for someone at a young age his mental toughness is something I have not seen in many players. That is a huge advantage for a goalkeeper. It showed when he was brought on against Brisbane because he handled it fantastically well."

Mautone also runs a goalkeeping academy called First Choice Keeper. Due to constant requests for specialised training for goalkeepers and the lack of academies around he decided to establish First Choice Keeper.

"I basically treat everyone who comes into the academy the same way I do my Victory keepers." But First Choice Keeper is only for serious goalkeepers. "The Academy is there for people to take their goalkeeping seriously. I try and give the kids an insight of how I coach the senior keepers at Victory and I think it works really well. We have some really talented keepers coming through the Victorian ranks, which I am really excited about as the director of the academy but also the goalkeeping coach of Victory."

First Choice Keeper is based at Port Melbourne Soccer Club and Mautone is grateful that Port shares his vision.

"They see the vision of an elite goalkeeping academy coming out of their fantastic facilities. They have seen some cross-over with some kids from my academy going over to their junior set-up.

"We are pretty busy on Monday, Thursday and Saturday morning. We are actually looking about setting up a three-day camp over the Australia Day weekend which will be good; it will be part fitness-based, technique-based and video analysis-based."

Email, mobile phone and postal contact details for First Choice Keeper can be found at www.firstchoicekeeper.com.au.



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By Adam Hussein

Inner City FC Junior Semi Finals Review

The spot light was on the Futsal Oz juniors with two semi finals at 5:30pm & 6:00pm. Inner City side Metropolitan FC took to the courts against arch rivals the Barcelona Joeys. It was a tense clash that saw the Joeys open up with a lofted in side ball that was headed home. Metro responded with two side ball set pieces of their own only to be halted by a thumping free kick from half court. The game went into golden goal with Metro dominating proceedings and forcing home a keeper error that sent them into Saturdays Grand Final.

Inner City were hoping to make it two from two with CF Brunswick coming up against the much older and stronger Ultimate 9. Brunswick peppered the opposition on plenty of occasions but the Ultimate 9 grabbed the upper hand with a turn and shot going into the break a goal to the good. Brunswick came out firing and were awarded a penalty which was coolly converted followed up by a full press on the opposition kick off to run the line and pummel a top corner screamer. Ultimate 9 had all the answers; they equalized and sent the game into golden goal scoring with 3 seconds remaining to set up a scintillating grand final against Metropolitan on Saturday.

V-League Round 7 Review

CF Brunswick's inability to field a side meant that there enormous clash against the champions North Melbourne was to be postponed taking the sting out of round seven. However the 10 remaining V-League teams fought it out to the 40th minute in each of the following five games as the league table again had its movers and shakers.

Metropolitan 5 vs. 5 Fitzroy

Lowly placed Metro were the favorites for this clash even given Fitzroy's convincing win over Balwyn a week earlier.

Metro however were without a keeper for 10 minutes and Fitzroy took full advantage scoring two past an unqualified Ryan Filipovic. Dardan Djokoj arrived to Metro's relief as they began to play with the skill, silk and composure fans are used to week in week out.

The Metro brothers were as deadly as ever, with Dino kicking a single & Alija Redzepovic scoring a double. It was 2-2 at half time and 5-5 at full time with Blackburn & Vithoulkas kicking doubles for Fitzroy. The Manny Karas inspired Fitzroy happy to walk away with a vital point in their quest for safety. Metropolitan left frustrated again by another below par performance that sees them sit in their lowest position ever at 10th.

They will be looking for a win desperately against Ashburton next week.



Brimbank's Alija Karic tries to contain Essendon's Aleksander Duric who is a striker for the Singapore national football team.



Fitzroy's Dimi Vithoulkas scores a late goal in the draw against Metropolitan.

Essendon 3 vs. 6 Brimbank

Christmas couldn't come sooner for Essendon who haven't won a game since round three.

Newly promoted Brimbank stunned friends and fans alike winning their first game of the season at the seventh attempt. Adem Alicevic inspiring his fellow team mates with a four goal haul aided by a double from Alija Karic. Nabboutless Essendon had no answers to the relentless pressure and tenacious defending by Brimbank. Duric Aleksandar scored two decent goals on debut with goalkeeper Jimmy Brennan kicking the other single for Essendon.

The game was a dire display of futsal with both teams giving possession away cheaply. A relatively clean game with no cards and minimal fouls though and a huge victory for Brimbank in the end. Both sides are looking to survive the relegation play offs with Richmond still rooted to the foot of the table. Essendon take on the State League Champions Richmond next week while Brimbank face the daunting proposition of Balwyn.

FC Richmond 2 vs. 6 FC Prahran
Richmond put in their best showing of the season against high flying FC Prahran.

They held them to 0-0 for almost the entire first half until unlikely scorer Resit Culculoglu poked home for 1-0. Con Makris made a return from the now famous exile island to don the clubs for the state league champions and he had a solid game.

Taylan Aksoy & Guiseppe Amantio scored solitaires totaling the measly two goals Richmond scored. For Prahran the much talked about Hip Tran scored two, Clint & Avram

with the other singles in a convincing 6-2 victory. A fast paced match with few fouls and lots of attacking flair from the likes of Barbosa & Avram made it interesting for the neutral. Prahran cementing third spot before the Christmas break and Richmond looking weak and feeble at the bottom of the table. Richmond takes on Essendon while Brunswick takes on Prahran.

FC Balwyn 6 vs. 1 Ashburton

The game that had fans and tipsters alike divided was a complete white wash literally with Balwyn smashing the green machine for 6.

Balwyn manager Matt Obeid would've been glad to have Rob Zadworny back for the all whites as he single handedly tore Ashburton apart. Ashburton manager Maurice must've been wondering where it all went wrong after training hard and playing well against the Victorian Men's Team the previous Saturday.

Balwyn, by far the hungrier of the two sides are looking to cement a top four spot and went about their business shrewdly. Alongside Zadwornys goal, Reardo Luka & Incredible Ivan Zilic scored doubles and Mark Saric a single. George Mcheileh scored the only goal for Ashburton, the youngster prodded and peppered the Balwyn goal but couldn't beat goalkeeper Franjo Saric. Balwyn sit pretty in 4th on the ladder with Ashburton safe in 6th.

Pascoe Vale 6 vs. 3 Mickleham

It was a case of save the best for last as Pascoe Vale looked to pull three points clear of the resting North Melbourne.



Prahran's Maxi Avram (R) embraces team-mate Hep Tran after scoring in his sides win against Richmond.

And they did but it wasn't as easy as most had predicted! The outdoor quartet of Kire, Iuliano & the Colossimo brothers almost pulled of an upset only trailing 2-1 at half time and within touching distance throughout the match. Pascoe Vale had Dianooosh Rasoulzadeh back along with Mark Burton & Ahmed Azzam.

But with the inclusions came the exclusions of Adam Husseini & Vadim Mazurskiy. Caro led his black and white army with three good goals, Simsek, Da Silva and

V-League Standings

	P	W	D	L	F	A	G	D	Pts
1 Pascoe Vale FC	7	7	0	0	56	22	34	21	
2 North Melbourne FC	6	6	0	0	39	16	23	18	
3 FC Prahran	7	5	0	2	45	25	20	15	
4 FC Balwyn	7	4	0	3	31	33	-2	12	
5 Mickleham FC	7	3	1	3	41	36	5	10	
6 Ashburton FC	7	3	1	3	33	37	-4	10	
7 Fitzroy FC	7	3	1	3	31	36	-5	10	
8 FC Essendon	7	3	0	4	39	42	-3	9	
9 CF Brunswick	6	2	0	4	28	41	-13	6	
10 Metropolitan FC	7	1	1	5	40	48	-8	4	
11 Brimbank FC	7	1	1	5	26	42	-16	4	
12 FC Richmond	7	0	1	6	25	56	-31	1	

Round 7 RESULTS

Wed 14th Dec

· 6:30 FC Essendon v Brimbank FC	3 - 6
· 7:15 Metropolitan FC v Fitzroy FC	5 - 5
· 8:00 Mickleham FC v Pascoe Vale FC	3 - 6
· 8:45 CF Brunswick v North Melbourne FC	T. B. A
· 9:30 FC Balwyn v Ashburton FC	6 - 1
· 10:15 FC Richmond v FC Prahran	2 - 6

Round 8 CLASHES
Wed 21st Dec

- T.B.A FC Richmond v FC Essendon
- T.B.A CF Brunswick v FC Prahran
- T.B.A Pascoe Vale FC v North Melbourne FC
- T.B.A Mickleham FC v Fitzroy FC
- T.B.A FC Balwyn v Brimbank FC
- T.B.A Metropolitan FC v Ashburton FC

Top Goal Scorers

1. M. Avram FCP	17
2. J. Da Silva PVFC	17
3. A. Nabbout FCE	17
4. A. Caro PVFC	12

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Photos By
JIMMY SOUFIS



SANTOS IN WORLD CLUB FINAL; U DE CHILE WIN SUDAMERICANA

Latin Wrap



Francis Fields

Brazilian fans and media await Santos' dream passage to the Club World Cup final in Japan against Barça to be played Sunday in Yokohama.

It is no doubt the dream final to be played between Copa Libertadores champion Santos FC and joint current UEFA Champions League and European Super Cup holders FC Barcelona.

Santos must improve in the final if it is to win FIFA's 2011 Club World Cup in Japan after defeating Japanese club Kashiwa Reysol in the semi.

Despite the solid victory for "O Peixe" by 3-1 over the current J-League champions, coach Muricy Ramalho acknowledges his side must improve if it is to defeat eventual final opponents Barcelona.

"Our play, the way we held possession tonight was not good. We understand that maintaining possession is key but not a guarantee to win games, we need to be more convincing and we are in need of a bit of improvement", pondered the Santos boss.

According to Ramalho at the post-match conference, the Santos defence was also looking shaky. He mentioned Durval, who played at left-back had difficulties in his marking.

"We had difficulties against Kashiwa that we are not used to having, and tonight we didn't mark properly. This is a worrying sign for the next match which is the final because if it is Barcelona who we play, they are individually superior. We simply cannot mark players off the ball the way we did tonight".

COPA BRIDGESTONE SUDAMERICANA FINAL

Universidad de Chile win historic title

Jorge Sampaoli has made news around the world with his attacking-minded football and formations. It all paid off for the workaholic Argentinian as Universidad de Chile won 3-0 with goals by Eduardo Vargas on 3 minutes,

Extending a 34-match winning streak, move aside Brisbane Roar, move aside another side this year that shown superiority as an international and continental club tournament like the Copa Sudamericana is no easy feat and according to many, only has Barcelona to beat.

It was definitely a tournament to remember for Eduardo Vargas. The tiny-sized Chilean forward did dazzling runs with his exceptional dribbling and is a



The red card explains the Copa Sudamericana second leg final. A frustrated showing for Liga and a special tournament for number 17, Eduardo Vargas. Remember the name.

reason why numerous clubs around Europe and the United Kingdom are after his signature.

On barely three minutes, a precise cross from Charles Aránguiz enabled a mix up on Liga's defence for Vargas to unleash a powerful low shot from a loose ball.

Sampaoli outplayed his counterpart Edgardo Bauzá in the coaching bench making the right changes. On came Gustavo Lorenzetti for Francisco Castro and made his impact on 79 minutes picking a rebound for 2-0.

The stadium in raptures.

Perhaps a case of exhaustion for Liga de Quito was the factor behind the Ecuadorian giants' lack of effectiveness in front of goal and its below-par performance.

For a team that knows well what it is to play in finals, under pressure, with two-legs both home and away and playing with stable defence lines and potent counter-attacking breaks, Liga just did not perform as they themselves expected. A number of players were coming back from injuries and the tight schedule in their calendar was a valid reason as to why the team did not extend its hopeful campaign it had done during the course of the 2011 season.

Stumbling to an ambitious and close-knit Universidad de Chile side, the Chilean university side made a number of promises to deliver to its loyal and passionate fans. It has delivered with a mid-season championship with the Apertura and now, CONMEBOL's second semester Copa Sudamericana.

Nearing the end of the match, midfielder Matías Rodríguez got his marching orders as did Liga's Guagua at the back.

A key mention to heroic goalkeeper Johnny Herrera and his constant string of saves throughout the tournament. One would hope his sometimes loud

mouth and exaggerating comments would guide him for national team selection. A formidable figure for "la U" in the tournament.

Universidad de Chile made a dream a reality for a Chilean side winning a first continental international tournament since its arch-rival did so in 1991.

The highly ambitious Chilean side wins its first international club tournament and this weekend seeks its passage to the Chilean Clausura semi finals where it meets arch rival Universidad Católica.

Remember the name, Eduardo Vargas. Voted the tournament's best player and scoring a record number of ten goals in the Copa Sudamericana, he has an immense future in his hands.

BOCA VICTORIOUS

In Argentina, Boca Juniors won its final fixture at its breathtaking La Bombonera stadium against All Boys. Its serious-looking coach however, Julio César Falcioni was caught in fraganti and very kindly so in front of amused photographers after the full-time whistle when players, fans and the Boca staff began their festivities.

The carnival-like atmosphere was euphoric and Falcioni was caught grabbing one of the cheerleader girls that were also dancing to the percussion drum beats of the "murga".

Perhaps the newest season signing for Boca next year for the 2012 Clausura championship?

TREZEGUET TO ARGENTINA?

Also news coming from the River Plate nation it is well-known that former France international David Trézeguet once lived in Argentina.

The Rouen-born forward and World Cup winner is currently a free agent after being released by Baniyas SC in the United Arab Emirates' Pro-League due to injury.



Boca Juniors did win the Argentine title weeks ago, now it's time for coach Julio César Falcioni to enjoy the celebrations.

From his early days at Platense - at the time in Argentina's top flight, Trézeguet jumped to AS Monaco before his notable ten-year stint at Juventus.

Son of a former dual Argentinian-French footballer Jorge Trézeguet, who now works as his agent alongside colleague Sergio Fortunato says Trézeguet would favour a move to River Plate.

Fortunato also manages his former club teammate Mauro Camoranesi, a dual Argentinian with joint Italian passport. Speaking on radio, his agent quoted, "There is a chance he will move to River Plate, as he is also a fan of the club".

"Trézeguet has a desire to play in Argentina and there are several offers at the moment".

The 34-year old forward will arrive in Buenos Aires in the next couple of days and will follow up his conversation with River boss, former captain Matías Almeyda who would be an immediate option alongside Uruguayan forward Santiago Silva, currently at Fiorentina and Racing's problematic and prolific Colombian goalscorer Teófilo Gutiérrez.

River Plate is in need to bolster their goal tally and might be solution. Trézeguet needs to overcome his series of injuries that effectively cut-short his time with Hércules in Alicante during last season's relegation from La Liga.

Coach Almeyda has also opened the possibility to incorporate Argentine midfielder and Club América captain Daniel Montenegro back to Buenos Aires from Mexico City.

"El Millonario" played its last fixture for the season in the second division against Patronato as several players were notified their services will no longer be required.

River resume its second-tier season nice and early in the morning at 9.30am on Wednesday 4th of January next year with pre-season commencing four days later until the end of month

with a concluding friendly match to be confirmed.

COLOMBIAN COACH SACKED

Leonel Álvarez, the national team of Colombia has been sacked by the Colombian Football Federation after a poor start to their 2014 World Cup qualifying campaign.

President Luis Bedoya said to the reporters "This is a unanimous decision, brought about because of the team's recent results and our analysis of reports on their performances."

"We thought now was the time to try and put things right."

"Sadly we have decided today to terminate Leonel Álvarez's contract and begin the search for a new coach of the national team."

Colombia has played three qualifiers so far under Álvarez. They beat Bolivia (away) by 2-1, drew (home) 1-1 to Venezuela and lost (home) 2-1 to Argentina. As a result, they are currently sitting in sixth place in the nine-nation South American qualifying competition.

The 46-year-old had only been in the job since September when he replaced Hernán Darío Gómez, who resigned in August amid a furore sparked by his hitting a woman who insulted him in a Bogota nightclub.

VALDERRAMA REMEMBERS

Former legendary midfield maestro Carlos "El Pibe" Valderrama has compared the style of possession and the quick passing game of Catalan giants Barcelona to that of Colombia's Deportivo Cali between the years 1985 and 1986.

"At Cali we played just like Barcelona, in fact, people today still fondly remember that side. It was a fine side and the people of Colombia does not forget the football played by Deportivo Cali", declared Valderrama in his native Spanish to Diario Mionewspaper of Bogotá. An emblematic and reference to Co-

lombia's national football side, flamboyant Valderrama (pictured) was synonymous on the football pitch to flair, creativity, wizardry and character. He praised the work of Deportivo Cali's Serbian coach at the time Vladimir Popovic, who thinks only needed an international club title to show for his tenure.

"The only thing missing was a title. There have other sides around the world who will always be remembered for playing beautiful football ahead of titles and that is a priority. Deportivo Cali is forever remembered for this, it's in the folklore of our people, and that is important. We are happy for what we did in our careers and even more so because it was Deportivo Cali", commented "El Pibe".

Deportivo Cali, the green-coloured team from the capital of the Valle del Cauca region in Colombia's southwest has a popular and passionate following. Back then, playing alongside Valderrama were Colombians Bernardo Redín - now a coach, Armando Osma, Sergio "Checho" Angulo, Paraguayan Jorge Amado Nunes, former Chilean international and dead-ball specialist Jorge "Mortero" Aravena among other household names.

Valderrama admitted on another note, Deportivo Cali currently lacks character and superiority with the heavy support it has in the country. He indicated the club is far from reaching the heights of its notable past signalling there is a lot of hard work to be done.

"Cali is years behind from making a championship final and its fans are reluctant for the current form to continue. They are demanding and are today feeling resentment. 'Depor' needs to be in the finals", he concluded.

Until next week, Adiós.

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Bailey still hopeful Preston gets it Wright

By Con Stamocostas

1) Hi Bailey, can you give us some background info about how you got into football and where you played local football in Australia?

I first started playing when I was four or five years old for my local team just down the road from where I lived, Langwarrin Soccer Club, which is based on the Mornington Peninsula in Victoria. I played there for a good few years and I had my Dad coach me for a few seasons there before I moved to Mornington for one season. When I was 13 I then moved to Dandenong Thunder for a season, then I got selected for the Victorian Institute of Sport and I was there for two years. Before my time at Thunder was finished I went back to Langwarrin to play for half a season before eventually making the move to Preston North End where I am now.

2) How did the move to North End come about?

Well, I had a trial with Blackburn Rovers arranged and one with Preston too just before Christmas 2008. I almost cancelled my trial with Preston due to getting called up to the Australian under-17s, the Joeys. When I finally got to England I did manage to get one training session in with Preston before my trial at Blackburn but for me it wasn't to be at Blackburn because I got injured during that trial but I was fortunate enough to be offered a two-year scholarship with Preston and I jumped at the opportunity. The reason the trials came about was because I didn't see much of a future for myself in football in Australia and had actually talked to my family about quitting football altogether and taking up a trade or going to work full-time with my Dad. At the time I was already working with him. My Dad asked me if I would like to give England one last chance

before throwing everything away. I did and now the rest is history, so I owe a lot to my father for giving me the chance to come over here.

3) What is it like living in the UK, Bailey, and how do you deal with homesickness?

It's different, especially in winter, in fact it took time to adjust to training in ice-cold and snowy weather but it's like most things in life – you adapt and get used to it and if I'm being honest, homesickness was never really much of an issue for me. When I came to Preston I lived in digs at first and all 19 youth-team lads all lived in the one big house. We had Joan and Mick, a married couple, looking after us and a lady who cleaned the house whose name was also Joan.

4) How did you get used to the professional environment in England and what were the differences to the level you faced in Australia?

The big difference for me was the quality that players showed on the ball. The pace of the game is quicker but for me it was how good players were on the ball and how you got punished if you didn't keep the ball and if you made a mistake. If you did make a mistake, you would most likely get punished for it big-time because of how good some teams and players are at scoring goals.

5) What do you hope to achieve in your football career?

What can I say? I would love to win trophies at the highest level possible, league championships, the UEFA Champions' League, the Premier League, the World Cup ... for any young lad you always look at players achieving things at those levels and think how you would love for that to be you and for me I would love to achieve that more than anything else.



6) There are a lot of young players like you that are going straight to Europe and bypassing the A-League here. Can you tell us if any A-League teams approached you?

If I had been offered something from an A-League club than maybe I would never have gone to the UK, but I was never approached or offered anything from any A-League club and if I am being honest, I'm glad I didn't because it gave me the opportunity to

play over here which is arguably the best set-up for professional football in the world.

7) How do you relax away from football?

Well, we don't get a lot of time off but usually I get my feet up and chill out around the house. I love my films so I like to get to the cinema or watch a film at the house. I guess I'm a bit of a boring person really.

8) Tell us more about yourself as a person. Describe yourself in a few words.

I would say I am a hard-working, self-motivated and committed person. I like to do my best in everything because I take pride in what I do and how I do things. I would also mention here my favourite quote and it's one that my Dad told me: "Fail to prepare, then prepare to fail." It's stuck with me ever since.

9) Can you give us an insight into a week as a professional player for Preston North End on and off the field?

Not easy. It's hard to say because it can change so regularly. Most days we train in the morning and sometimes we have a weight session in the afternoon depending when our next game is. Sometimes you have reserves games on Wednesday and first team games Saturday or sometimes the first team plays Saturday or Tuesday so it all depends on our games and when they are. It's hard work but it is the best job in the world. Guaranteed.

10) Preston was relegated from the Championship last season. What was that like and does this mean more game time for you this season?

Everyone who plays football will tell you it's the worst feeling getting relegated. It wasn't good because the club was forced to make changes, which meant some staff getting made redundant and some players being sold. We have got a good team now though. We started the season well although we hit a bad run of games but I'm still hopeful that we can turn things around and push up towards a promotion position. It would be great if we could go straight back into the Championship. I haven't played in the league yet this season but hopefully

I'll get the chance. There's still a long way to go. I have played in the Carling Cup against Southampton, which was a good test for me and I think I came through it okay.

11) Can you give us a brief synopsis of your time in the UK? Like any memorable games or experiences that you have had living in the UK that changed you?

I have had a few opportunities I thought I would never get. I've played against the Manchester United senior team in a behind-doors friendly in which we kept a clean sheet when they had Michael Owen and Macheda up front. That was an experience just being at the Manchester United training ground. I've played in the Carling Cup and in the Championship, which again I never thought I would ever get the chance to do. I'd love to experience one of the best things in football and that is being promoted. And I should mention that being offered my first professional contract was also a very, very big highlight for me. I would also say that a really good thing about the UK is the quality of the coaches you have here. I had Dean Ramsdale and Jamie Hoyland coach me as a youth-team player and they are both top-class coaches who I learnt a lot from and they were the ones that signed me at Preston. I have also been lucky enough to have David Unsworth as our first-team coach who I also have learnt a lot from. He has played at the highest club level possible in England and knows the game inside out.

The whole experience of coming here and ending up with a professional contract and having to work hard to get to where you want to be is just amazing in itself. But there's a long way to go.

Editor's note: As we went to press Preston sacked manager Phil Brown. Graham Alexander and Unsworth have been appointed on a caretaker basis.

Rasic entertains FFV

By Roy Hay

Master coach Rale Rasic entertained Life Members at their annual function at the offices of Football Federation Victoria last Saturday afternoon.

The 76-year-old is still learning and teaching and he has lost none of his sharp, provocative wit as he ranged over his experiences from the Women's World Cup in Germany earlier this year to the physical and cultural shock of his arrival at Essendon Airport in the middle of a Victorian winter wearing only a teeshirt and shorts in 1962. He talked of his days at JUST and his appointment as coach of the Socceroos but his main focus was on how the game has developed and changed in his lifetime. He remembered the influence of John Barclay who was his team manager on several occasions.

Rale dissected the Women's World Cup and its presentation praising the thoughtful and effective German organisation and the tactical maturity of the Japanese team, which overcame physical limitations to defeat a series of more fancied opponents. He wishes some men's teams could show similar capacities. He also talked about the 265 centres of excellence established in Germany in the last five years, virtually without public finance. These have been located in smaller urban and rural centres, with the coaching staff paid by Deutscher Fussball-Bund. The costs on the individual to play the game are much lower than they are



Rale Rasic with FFV Life Members Joe Docherty and Hugh Murney. PHOTO: ROY HAY

here in Australia, he pointed out.

Rale reminisced about players and colleagues and obviously enjoyed himself among friends, who all respected his passion for the game and its people. He poked gentle fun at Hugh Murney, saying he called him 'snail', because even Rasic was faster than him. But he pointed out that Murney played the game above the neck, and few players got past him. He talked of coaching clinics with Sir Stanley Matthews and Kevin Keegan which drew thousands of applicants. He remembered fondly Victorian Socceroos Jimmy Mackay and Jimmy Rooney and was delighted to catch up with FFA

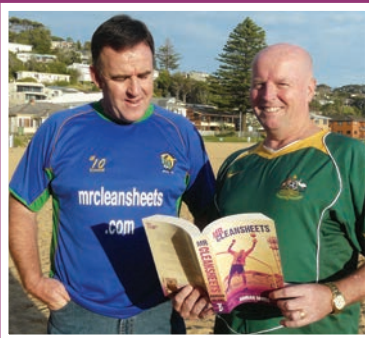
Director Jack Reilly who was present. The recent death of the Brazilian superstar Socrates led him to reflect on the need to recognise our heroes while they are alive, not wait until they pass on before acknowledging their contribution to the game.

Introducing Rale Rasic, FFV President Nick Monteleone told of the dilemma his father faced as a recent immigrant in 1974. Should badly needed family resources go towards a house or a television set to watch Rale's Socceroos in Germany? Football won and Nick was hooked. After the talk Life Members attended the Melbourne Victory versus Adelaide United A-League match.

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Manchester City left feeling blue

EPL
Wrap



Steven Talevski

Manchester City has slumped to their first Premier League defeat this season after a 2-1 comeback victory from title rivals Chelsea at Stamford Bridge.

An 84th minute penalty from substitute Frank Lampard and a first half Raul Meireles strike was enough to cancel out Mario Ballotelli's opener in the second minute.

After the game Frank Lampard told BBC Sport about his disappointments of starting a number of games on the bench as he feels his as fit as his ever been and does not know why he hasn't been starting.

"I want to play, simple as that" He said. "I'm as fit as I've ever been. I've been in a good run of form and now I've not been playing"

"I haven't spoken [to Villas-Boas] so I don't know [why], simple as that."

Manchester City's lead atop of the English Premier League table has now been cut down to two points after cross town rivals Manchester United defeated Wolverhampton Wolves 4-1.

Chelsea's win also means they move up to third place after Tottenham suffered their first defeat in eleven Premier League games as they went down 2-1 to Stoke City at the Britannia Stadium.

Arsenal have now separated themselves from Newcastle in fourth spot after the Gunners defeated Everton from yet another fantastic Robin van Persie strike as Newcastle fell away to Norwich City in a 4-2 loss.

Liverpool were also able to leap frog Newcastle United in fifth position on goal difference, with a one nil victory over Queens Park Rangers thanks to a Luis Suarez strike.



Bolton remained on the bottom of the Premier League table after a 2-1 loss at home to Aston Villa.

Only one point above Bolton is Blackburn who suffered a 2-1 loss at the Stadium of Light to Sunderland who picked up their first win under new Manager Martin O'Neil.

Wigan moved up to 18th on the table after a come from behind victory to West Bromwich Albion at The Hawthorns.

In the only other Premier League match this weekend Swansea City were able to move above Fulham to tenth spot after a two nil victory courtesy to second half goals from Scott Sinclair and Danny Graham.

EPL Preview

With the Christmas period well and truly here the English Premier League has both weekend and mid-week fixtures this week in what is an important time in the championship race.

Manchester City will look to stay atop of the table as they host Arsenal in arguably the tie of the week.

Manchester City will need to find a way to stop inform Arsenal striker Robin van Persie who has scored 19 goals this sea-

son, including 15 in the English Premier League.

Manchester City also hosts Stoke City mid-week while Arsenal pay a visit to Villa Park to face Aston Villa.

Manchester United, a team synonymous with making championship moves during the Christmas period look to overtake cross town rivals Manchester City as they face tough trips to Loftus Road and Craven Cottage to take on Queens Park Rangers and Fulham.

However, Manchester United will be without Darren Fletcher who has taken an extended break from football for health reasons.

The club has announced that Fletcher has ulcerative colitis, a chronic inflammatory bowel condition. It is unknown when he will return to football for either Manchester United or the Scotland national team where he is Captain.

The club said in a statement that, "Darren's continued desire to play and his loyalty to both his club and country has probably compromised the chances of optimising his own health and fitness."

Meanwhile, Chelsea who are coming off ending Manchester City's unbeaten league streak visit Wigan and then Tot-

tenham in what will be a fierce London derby.

With both teams on equal points Tottenham will look to get all three points in their clash at home against Sunderland.

Not too far behind the top four, Liverpool look to catch the teams above them with away clashes against Aston Villa and Wigan while Newcastle United look to end their losing streak against Swansea before they host West Bromwich Albion.

Bottom of the table Bolton will look for some vital points against Fulham before visiting second from bottom Blackburn in what essentially is a six point match.

However Blackburn will look to move away from Bolton before their clash as they host West Bromwich Albion.

Just two points above the relegation zone, Wolverhampton face both Stoke City and Norwich City while Sunderland visit Queens Park Rangers along with visiting Tottenham.

In the only other fixtures, Tim Cahill's Everton host both Swansea City and Norwich City at Goodison Park.

Fulham, PSG bow out

Fulham were stunningly knocked out of the Europa League on Wednesday, while PSG also exited the competition.

The English Premier League side began the matchday one point ahead of Polish side Wisla Krakow, meaning that a win would be enough to send them through to the knockout stages.

And they were well on their way to securing all three points at half-time after goals to Clint Dempsey and Kerim Frei. But Odense – who were incapable of progressing past the group stage – kept battling, and a 64th minute free-kick from Hans Andreasen beat Fulham's third-string goalkeeper Neil Etheridge.

Fulham, though, only needed a win to be safely through, but the Danes continued to push the hosts' defensive line, and they struck with what turned out to be the last touch of the game.

Senegalese forward Baye Djiby Fall headed in a terrific cross to bring Odense level, much to the contempt of the locals.

And with Wisla Krakow defeating the already qualified FC Twente 2-1, it was the Poles who went through to the knockout rounds from Group K.

Lukasz Gargula and Tzvetan Genkov scored for the winners but their match in Poland finished with Fulham still in front in London.

Odense's equaliser sparked belated celebrations in the Krakow crowd and amongst the players. In Group F, PSG exited the competition despite defeating Athletic Bilbao 4-2.

The Parisian outfit – who spent over 65 million pounds in the off-season – headed into the game on the back of successive wins but they were quickly trailing after Jon Aurtenetxe's fourth-minute strike.

Javier Pastore and Mathieu Bodmer responded before half-time for PSG although their lead lasted just 10 minutes after the break with David Lopez leveling proceedings for the La Liga outfit.

An Inigo Perez own-goal and a Guillaume Hoarau penalty in the last five minutes handed PSG the win but it was in vain after Red Bull Salzburg – who were level on seven points with them

prior to the matchday – won 3-2 at Slovan Bratislava.

Milos Lacny scored two in the first six minutes for the Slovaks but from there Salzburg mounted a terrific comeback, with Jakob Jantscher and Leonardo responding with goals of their own before the break.

An own goal from Marian Had just eight minutes into the second half sealed the result for the Austrians who qualified for the knockout stages ahead of PSG Group F on goal difference only.

In Group D, Lazio got the win they needed to progress by toppling leaders Sporting Lisbon 2-0 in Rome, thanks to goals from Libor Kozak and Giuseppe Sculli in a result that meant FC Zurich's 2-0 home success against Vaslui amounted to nothing.

Besiktas defeated the already qualified Stoke City to top Group E, with the Turkish side scoring three second-half goals to beat the 10-man visitors 3-1. The other match saw nine-man Dynamo Kyiv claim a thrilling 3-3 draw against Maccabi Tel Aviv.

Anderlecht finished Group L with six wins from as many matches after an entertaining 5-3 win over Lokomotiv Moscow and AEK Athens joined them on the winners list, with the Greek side earning their first points of the campaign with a 3-1 win at Sturm Graz.

Bundesliga side Schalke 04 toppled Israeli outfit Maccabi Haifa 3-0 in Group J to finish on top of the group and joining them in the next stage were Steaua Bucharest who defeated AEK Larnaca 3-1.

From the 12 existing groups, the top two sides from each will join the eight third-placed sides in the UEFA Champions League in the round of 32.

Teams qualified so far for the round of 32:

Anderlecht, Lokomotiv Moscow, FC Twente, Wisla Krakow, Schalke 04, Steaua Bucharest, Athletic Club, FC Salzburg, Besiktas, Stoke City, Lazio, Sporting.

The remaining group matches were due to play overnight.

Victor Viktoria for Plzen's maiden run

By Mark Smith in Prague

Viktoria Plzeň finished their Champions League campaign on a high, the Czech minnows made a stirring comeback against the Italian giants AC Milan, two late goals from David Bystron and Michal Ďuriš stole an unlikely 2-2 draw and gave the home fans a reason to cheer. "That we finally scored two goals, is almost a dream. We can take it as a small victory" said Plzen midfielder Daniel Kolar after the game.

Zlatan Ibrahimovic was rested for the Italian champions but Pato and Robinho lined up instead, with Clarence Seedorf sitting behind the strike duo. Plzeň had the better of the first half, creating chance after chance, whilst it looked like AC Milan's mind was elsewhere as the Czechs took the game to the Italians.

Two quick fire goals from Pato and Robinho swung the game in AC Milan's favour, but with just three minutes remaining David Bystron pulled one back for Plzen. Substitute Michal Ďuriš then scored the equalizer deep into injury to send the 20,000 Plzen fans into delirium.

The Czech Gambrinus Liga Champions Viktoria Plzeň entered the UEFA Champions League group stages for the first time in their history. Plzeň won the Czech league playing an expansive, attacking game which was instilled in the players by coach Pavel Vrba. Suddenly, the domestic dominance of Sparta and Slavia Prague had given way to the modest town of Plzeň,

Pavel Vrba's men won all six games

in qualifying for the UEFA Champions League culminating in victory over Danish champions FC Copenhagen but then all of a sudden things got serious. European giants AC Milan and Barcelona, arguably the greatest footballing side for a generation, were drawn alongside plucky Plzeň and BATE Borisov from Belarus.

Immediately, attentions were focused on the trips to Milan and Barcelona, but Plzeň kicked off their historic campaign against BATE Borisov in front of a packed house at Synot Tip Arena in Prague. Plzeň's own stadium was under renovation and did not meet the required UEFA standards. The game finished 1-1 with BATE Borisov looking the more dangerous of the two sides; it wasn't the start the Czechs were looking for.

Next up was a trip to Milan and a chance to showcase their talents against one of Europe's most illustrious clubs. Before the game, Plzeň captain Pavel Horváth was asked if he had any similarities with Milan legend Clarence Seedorf "I have the same size pants," replied Horváth in his usual jovial manner.

Plzeň were unlucky not to take the lead in Milan and created several scoring opportunities, whilst riding their luck defensively. But a controversial second half penalty from Zlatan Ibrahimovic and a closely followed Antonio Cassano goal extinguished Plzeň's hopes of snatching any points from the Rossinieri.

Barcelona and Lionel Messi were waiting next for Pavel Vrba and his team, the Plzeň fans had their passports at the ready for another



Czech champs Viktoria Plzen came up against the might of AC Milan and Barcelona in their first foray into Champions League football and whilst flying the flag admirably, will now have to settle for the Europa League. Photo: MARK SMITH

trip to one of Europe's elite. Another credible performance from the Czechs saw Barcelona win the game with a surprisingly modest 2-0 victory. Just weeks earlier Barcelona had put five past the Belarussian side BATE Borisov in their own backyard.

With hopes of giving Barcelona a stern test in Prague were quickly dashed as defender Čišovský was sent off for Plzeň in the first half and Barcelona didn't need any further invitations to run riot. The Catalan giants left Prague with a 4-0 victory whilst Plzeň licked their wounds.

Plzeň play a 4-2-3-1 system which relies on the holding midfielders Horváth and Jiráček in dictating the play and releasing tricky wingers Vaclav Pilař and Milan Petrzela, the team attacks and defends as one unit and is wonderfully balanced. Their performances so far in Europe were earning praise and respect but ultimately they only had one point to show heading into the crunch game in Belarus.

AC Milan and Barcelona had sewn up the first two spots in the group, even before a ball had been kicked in all reality. But third position and a

place in the Europa League was still up for grabs as BATE Borisov hosted the Czech champions. It was an exciting end to end game with Plzeň showing their fluidity by attacking Borisov at every opportunity, a Marek Bakos goal won the game for Plzeň and the players celebrated with the small pocket of travelling fans and they sealed third place in the group.

Playing on Europe's biggest stage is ultimately the biggest shop window you can find as a footballer and following a string of impressive performances from the Czechs it was inevi-

table that the vultures would begin to circle. The outstanding Vaclav Pilař and Petr Jiráček have both received offers from German side Wolfsburg, and look likely to move in the January transfer window. So, it remains to be seen how Plzeň will cope by the time the Europa League knockout stage comes, but one thing will be certain, the Czechs will stay true to the attacking philosophy, regardless of who comes and who goes.

Captain Pavel Horváth summed up their Champions League perfectly "I enjoyed it tremendously. At the end I did not have much power, but the atmosphere and the players around me kept me going, it was very good. A great feeling.."

Draws for knock-out rounds

The draws for the knock-out rounds of the 2011/2012 UEFA club competitions will take place today (Friday 16 December) at the House of European Football in Nyon, Switzerland.

The pairings for the Round of 16 of the UEFA Champions League as well as the Round of 32 and the Round of 16 of the UEFA Europa League will be made during ceremonies to be staged at UEFA.

The UEFA Champions League draw will see the winners from one group facing the runnersup from another group, with the runners-up playing the first leg at home. The winners and runners-up of the same group cannot be drawn against each other. Clubs from the same association must not be drawn against each other.

Four-way battle not letting up in Serie A



While Milan and Juventus dropped points on the road, Udinese and Lazio ensured the traditional giants must keep a close eye on their progress. Elsewhere, Inter returned to the winners list as Napoli dropped more points.

Milan claimed a 2-2 draw at Bologna on Sunday but referee Gianluca Rocchi told centre stage with two big decisions favouring the champions. Clarence Seedorf handled inside the penalty area in clear sight of the referee late in the first half but Rocchi waved played on. Zlatan Ibrahimovic dived to win the Rossoneri a second half penalty that briefly had the visitors ahead.

Milan reserve goalkeeper Marco Amelia wished he could have his moment again as Alessandro Diamanti's effort squirmed past him a minute later to give the Ros-soblu a share of the spoils. Amid the controversy was a pulsating affair lit up by two cracking first half strikes from Marco Di Vaio and then Seedorf.

Interestingly, Milan Coach Massimiliano Allegri did not shy away from the fact his side had the rub of the green: "Looking back at the footage, Clarence Seedorf did seem to handle in the box...as for Zlatan Ibrahimovic, I think he dived to earn the penalty. In any case, the referee got it wrong for both teams."

The result meant Udinese could go first with a win at home to Chievo and they duly obliged, with Antonio Di Natale on target for the tenth time this season, increasing his strike rate to 67 goals in his last 84 league matches. With the 2-1

result, Udinese have now won seven straight at the Stadio Friuli, scoring 14 times and conceding just twice.

Juventus could have made Udinese's stay at the top brief with victory versus Roma on Monday night. Giallorossi boss Luis Enrique appeared to be feeling the strain in the pre-match press conference, stating he was sick of anti-Roma bull****. The hosts, so depleted by injury and suspension two midfielders had to drop into defence, took an early lead when Daniele De Rossi's weakly struck shot evaded Arturo Vidal's swing-and-miss on the line.

Juve fought back in the second half and found an equaliser when Giorgio Chiellini headed in Marcelo Estigarribia's mis-hit shot. Roma had a golden opportunity to retake the lead when Vidal fouled in the area sixty seconds later; however Francesco Totti saw his penalty saved by Gianluigi Buffon.

Lazio are not going anywhere either. They triumphed 3-2 at Lecce in Serse Cosmi's first match in charge of the hosts. Lecce put in a more spirited display and took the lead, yet ultimately succumbed to a Miroslav Klose double.

Inter fought to a 2-0 win against Fiorentina. Still not close to their best, it was nonetheless an encouraging sign for the Nerazzurri as Giampaolo Pazzini ended his scoring drought (no goal since September) by netting the first, while Yuto Nagatomo had a slice of luck for the second after a ricochet.

Napoli once again dropped points after a midweek Champions League encounter, this time at Novara. Ivan Radovanovic scored a belter to give the hosts a shock lead but Blerim Dzemaili hit truly after Marek Hamsik's miscue fell perfectly for the Swiss player.

Meanwhile, Palermo lost their 100% home record in an upset loss to Cesena as Genoa triumphed on the road at Siena. Atalanta drew their fourth straight match, 1-1 against Catania. Finally, Cagliari and Parma failed to find the net, meaning Cagliari have now drawn their



Inter's Diego Milito takes out a top gong in the awards category, running away with the Bidone D'Oro.

past four matches at home 0-0.

Genoa hosted Inter on Tuesday in their match rescheduled from November. Nagatomo struck for the second time in as many matches with a second half header to give Inter a valuable three points and perhaps dispel notions of a full blown crisis. Despite all that has been said they sit seventh, just ten points away from the lead.

Over the weekend the most unwanted prize in Italian football, the Bidone D'Oro was announced. The tongue-in-cheek award 'celebrates' the worst players of the year, with nominees ranging from forgotten Juve striker Amauri to former teammate Felipe Melo, plus Mauro Zarate and Adrian Mutu. Yet they were all pipped by Inter striker Diego Milito.

Round 16 offers three intriguing encounters. Lazio and Udinese meet at the Stadio Olimpico with Klose and Di Natale set to go head-to-head. At the other end, Lazio goalkeeper Federico Marchetti has been ruled out due to injury. Curiously, in contrast to Udinese, Lazio hold the best away record in Serie A, whereas in the capital they have won just three of seven.

Catania hosts Palermo in the ever-fier-

Sicilian Derby. The two sides are evenly matched on the ladder and miss a player each due to suspension after Nicolas Spolli and Ezequiel Munoz saw red last weekend.

Napoli hosts Roma in the 'Derby of the Sun'. The Romans will be buoyed by their gallant performance against Juve with so many players missing, but Luis Enrique will be hoping for a more peaceful build-up to this encounter. Ezequiel Lavezzi still believes Napoli are in the Scudetto hunt and with no European commitments until February, this is the time to make up ground on the leaders.

Juventus host Novara in the infrequently played Piedmont Derby, the first league meeting of the two since 1955. The Bianconeri will be without the suspended duo of Leonardo Bonucci and Vidal, both reaching the yellow card limit, while Mirko Vucinic is still injured.

Rejuvenated Inter are away at Cesena while city rival Milan welcomes Siena to the Stadio Giuseppe Meazza. Fiorentina will be hoping Stevan Jovetic returns in time to face Atalanta as Cagliari travel to Chievo minus Captain Daniele Conti. Genoa entertains Bologna and lastly, Parma squares off against Lecce.

Viva Espana



Pepe Lopez

Barca still the best

It was only round 15 of 38 in La Liga, yet Real Madrid had threatened to break 9 points clear of their nearest and perhaps only challengers, Barcelona FC.

Barca, had started the season unconvincingly compared to Real Madrid, having dropped points in 5 domestic matches, including a loss away to Madrid regional team Getafe.

At the Santiago Bernabeu in Madrid, 90,000 packed the stadium, with only a few hundred seats available and occupied by Catalan Barca supporters.

Within 23 seconds of the kick-off, Barcelona Goalkeeper Victor Valdes slipped on a greasy surface and gifted Real Madrid with a poor kick out from goal. In the resulting scramble, Real Madrid's French striker Karim Benzema pocked in the opening goal to the delight of the home supporters.

This was now a real test for Barca, regarded as the best team in Spain and Europe, as the reigning European Champions League and Spanish La Liga titles.

Unlike some of Real Madrid record price star signings, repeatedly this is where the likes of Barcelona's stars shine. The midfield of Andres Iniesta, Xavi and Leo Messi, moved into second gear and put on a show for the capital of Spain to sit back down and realise their apparent title challenge is doomed again to bridesmaid status.

After half an hour, Messi took on the Real Midfield, directly through the middle of the park, and won. His through ball to Chilean Alexis Sanchez was first class, as was Sanchez's strike on goal. Into the bottom left corner of the goal, beyond the reach of the Real Madrid's and Spain's International Goalkeeper, Iker Casillas.

At halftime, with scores locked at one goal a piece, a draw would have been a great result for Real Madrid. Knowing they were 3 points clear on the La Liga standings, and

still with a game in hand, a draw would have been a moral victory. Barca and their Coach Pep Guardiola knew this, and in the second half, their dynamic midfield moved into third gear. Within 10 minutes of the re-start, Xavi got Barca ahead. With some luck, his shot deflected off Real Madrid's Brazilian defender Marcelo and again beyond the reach of the outstretched Real Madrid Goalkeeper Iker Casillas. At 2-1 down, Madrid could no longer settle for the current scoreline. Jose Mourinho was forced to make changes.

It was evident that the battle was being won in midfield, and Real's cagey formation would have to open up to find goals. On came the great Madrid false hope in Brazilian midfielder Kaka. The game did swing again in favour of the home team, and Portuguese star Ronaldo missed a golden opportunity to restore parity. His open header from 10 yards was wide of the mark. In contrast, moments later, Catalan born and bred, Cesc Fabregas at the other end of the pitch, won a header on pure strength, and he directed it across the face of the goal for the final goal of the match.

Barca Coach Pep Guardiola was delighted with the win, but stepped short of claiming another La Liga title; 'I am delighted with the performance... Madrid will recover. To win here, you have to play a very good game and we have done that. But there is still much to do and Madrid will again be the leader if they beat Sevilla. There are no champions in December.'

Real Madrid Coach Jose Mourinho attempted to avoid controversy in this match, and that was evident to see, when he waited for the arrival of Barca Coach Pep Guardiola at the start of the match to shake hands for the cameras.

'Luck plays a part... When it was 1-0, we could easily have gone 2-0 up and maybe under normal circumstances we would do, but Cristiano has put it wide.

The first half was balanced. The second goal would have been pure luck and not about talent or failure.' Mourinho said.

One small moment of controversy in the match, was a Leo Messi mis-timed tackle when he was already on a yellow card, but Mourinho cautiously spoke of; 'I thought Messi could have been sent off, but until I see it again I won't say more in case I'm wrong.'

The win puts Barca back on top of the La Liga standings, though Real Madrid still have a game in hand. Barca will now travel to Japan to compete in the World Club Cup, to prove they are the best in the world.

Balkan Wrap

Alex Milic

Serbia

Partizan will take a ten point advantage over its closest follower Red Star going into the Winter break.

The first half of the season has been completed and one can say that the defending champions Partizan are on route to make it five league titles in a row following a convincing display in the first fifteen matches which saw them concede only five goals. In Round 15 the 'Black and Whites' easily accounted for bottom of the table Metalac in a 3:0 win with goals to Eduardo, Babovic and the teams most influential player former Serbia International Zvonimir Vukic. As Partizan added another win, the gap between second and third has been cut to only two points as Red Star lost to Vojvodina at an empty 'Marakana' stadium 2:0. Second half goals to Stevanovic and former Red Star junior Ljubinkovic dealt a huge blow to Prosinecki's sides

title hopes. Prosinecki following the loss put the whole team on the Transfer List and hoping to add some well needed funds in the search for quality players as he says this current side cannot keep up with Partizan. Radnicki Kragujevac is only two points behind Vojvodina and four behind Red Star as their fantastic start to the season continues, the newly promoted side only lost its first match last week and they bounced back from the defeat to Partizan with a 4:2 win over Rad. Two of Radnicki's goals were from Darko Spalevic a former Red Star player and Bosnian Premier League Golden Boot winner on two occasions who is now the top scorer of the Serbian Super-Liga with 10 goals to his name.

Red Star and Partizan will battle it out over two legs for a spot in the Serbian Cup Final. The first match will be played at the 'Markana' on March 11 with Red Star hoping for a good result as the Cup is the only trophy they have a real chance in winning this season. In the other Semi Final Vojvodina takes on Borac Cacak. Last years finalist Vojvodina has a great chance to reach the final and finally win a Serbian Cup having come close on several occasions and considering the disgraceful way they were robbed of the trophy last season.



Serbian veteran Marko Pantelic was on the scoresheet for Greece's Olympiakos, and regained top spot in the Super League.

Croatia

A match fixing scandal has reached Croatian Football as the President of the Referees Association and former FIFA referee Zeljko Siric was caught in on the act. He was offered money by 'undercover agent' and Hajduk President Hrvoje Males in re to 'fair officiating' as Hajduk has been felt hard done by officials over the years. There have also been ar-

rests as players from Vrazdin, Croatia Sesvete and Medjimurje have been accused of match fixing. The scandal has shaken Croatian football and a taskforce has been set up. It is a huge step to clean the country of corruption which has been going on for a while with everyone practically under investigation.

Greece

Olympiakos has a two point lead on top of the Greek SuperLeague following two 4:0 wins. The first came against Kerkyra with Serbian veteran Marko Pantelic scoring all four goals. The striker scored the opener in the 4:0 win against Levadiakos a match which saw Mirallas score a hat-trick. The 'Red and Whites' will look to consolidate their lead as they take on Giannina next. AEK Athens continues its fine start to the season as they are second following a 2:1 over Giannina. The 'Yellows' overcame Austrian side Sturm Graz 3:1 in the Europa League but it wasn't enough to get them into the knockout stages, they take on Atromitos next in the Greek League. Panathinaikos remains third but with two matches in hand over the top two, wins in both could see the 'Greens' top of the table, they came from behind to defeat Panionios with goals from Leto and Katsouranis, they take on Asteras next. PAOK is slowly climbing up the table following a win over Atromitos but are still twelve points behind league leaders Olympiakos, however the 'Black and Whites' have excelled in the Europa League this season and will take part in the knockout stages.

Turkey

Galatasaray and Fenerbahce are locked in a battle for the top of the league which looks like will continue right to the end as both sides have been consistent this season. Following their derby win Galatasaray powered Champions League side Trabzonspor in their own back yard with a 3:0 win, goals to Elmander, Selcuk and Ceyhun added another three points for the 'yellow and reds'. Fenerbahce bounced back from their derby loss with a superb 2:0 away win over former champions Bursaspor with goals to Senturk and Stoch. Don't count out Besiktas who have been playing superb football in the last month, despite slipping up against Istanbul a match that ended 1:1 the 'Black and Whites' have progressed to the knockout stages of the Europa League top of their group following a fine 3:1 win over English side Stoke. The derby match of Round 16 is between Fenerbahce and Trabzonspor. Galatasaray will look to add three new points when they take on Orduspor. Interestingly there is only a ten point gap which separates top of the table Galatasaray and tenth placed Trabzonspor.



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ENGLAND EPL



	Last5games Most recent first							
	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1 Manchester City	15	12	2	1	49	15	+34	38
2 Manchester United	15	11	3	1	35	14	+21	36
3 Chelsea	15	10	1	4	33	18	+15	31
4 Tottenham Hotspur	14	10	1	3	30	18	+12	31
5 Arsenal	15	9	2	4	31	23	+8	29
6 Liverpool	15	7	5	3	18	13	+5	26
7 Newcastle United	15	7	5	3	21	19	+2	26
8 Stoke City	15	6	3	6	16	24	-8	21
9 Aston Villa	15	4	7	4	18	19	-1	19
10 Norwich City	15	5	4	6	24	28	-4	19
11 Swansea City	15	4	5	6	16	20	-4	17
12 Everton	14	5	1	8	15	18	-3	16
13 Queens Park Ra...	15	4	4	7	15	26	-11	16
14 Fulham	15	3	6	6	16	18	-2	15
15 West Bromwich ...	15	4	3	8	14	23	-9	15
16 Sunderland	15	3	5	7	18	18	+0	14
17 Wolverhampton ...	15	4	2	9	16	28	-12	14
18 Wigan Athletic	15	3	3	9	14	29	-15	12
19 Blackburn Rovers	15	2	4	9	22	34	-12	10
20 Bolton Wanderers	15	3	0	12	20	36	-16	9

GERMANY Bundesliga



	Last5games Most recent first							
	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1 Bayern München	16	11	1	4	40	10	+30	34
2 Borussia Dortmund	16	9	4	3	31	11	+20	31
3 Schalke 04	16	10	1	5	33	22	+11	31
4 Borussia M'gla...	16	9	3	4	24	11	+13	30
5 Werder Bremen	16	9	2	5	30	26	+4	29
6 Bayer Leverkusen	16	7	5	4	22	19	+3	26
7 Stuttgart	16	6	4	6	23	19	+4	22
8 Hannover 96	16	5	7	4	19	23	-4	22
9 Hoffenheim	16	6	3	7	18	18	+0	21
10 Köln	16	6	3	7	27	32	-5	21
11 Hertha BSC	16	4	7	5	23	25	-2	19
12 Mainz 05	16	4	6	6	22	28	-6	18
13 Hamburger SV	16	4	6	6	20	26	-6	18
14 Wolfsburg	16	5	2	9	22	34	-12	17
15 Kaiserslautern	16	3	6	7	12	20	-8	15
16 Nürnberg	16	4	3	9	14	28	-14	15
17 Augsburg	16	3	5	8	14	27	-13	14
18 Freiburg	16	3	4	9	20	35	-15	13

THE CHAMPIONSHIP



	Last5games Most recent first							
	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1 Southampton	21	13	4	4	44	23	+21	43
2 West Ham United	21	12	4	5	36	20	+16	40
3 Cardiff City	21	10	8	3	34	22	+12	38
4 Middlesbrough	21	10	8	3	25	17	+8	38
5 Hull City	21	11	3	7	24	22	+2	36
6 Leeds United	21	10	5	6	36	29	+7	35
7 Brighton & Hov...	21	9	5	7	23	22	+1	32
8 Blackpool	21	8	7	6	33	27	+6	31
9 Leicester City	21	8	6	7	28	23	+5	30
10 Reading	21	8	6	7	26	22	+4	30
11 Crystal Palace	21	8	6	7	21	20	+1	30
12 Barnsley	21	8	6	7	30	31	-1	30
13 Birmingham City	19	8	5	6	26	22	+4	29
14 Derby County	21	8	4	9	26	31	-5	28
15 Burnley	21	8	3	10	31	40	-9	27
16 Portsmouth	20	7	5	8	23	22	+1	26
17 Peterborough U...	21	7	4	10	40	39	+1	25
18 Watford	21	6	7	8	22	30	-8	25
19 Millwall	21	5	8	8	23	24	-1	23
20 Ipswich Town	20	7	2	11	31	42	-11	23
21 Bristol City	21	5	5	11	21	33	-12	20
22 Nottingham Forest	21	6	2	13	18	36	-18	20
23 Doncaster Rovers	21	4	4	13	17	35	-18	16
24 Coventry City	21	2	7	12	17	32	-15	13

Greece Super League



	Last5games Most recent first							
	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1 Olympiakos Piraeus	13	9	3	1	33	12	+21	30
2 AEK Athens	13	9	1	3	22	15	+7	28
3 Panathinaikos	11	8	2	1	26	13	+13	26
4 Atromitos	12	5	5	2	13	13	+0	20
5 PAOK	13	5	4	4	18	13	+5	19
6 Xanthi	13	5	3	5	19	15	+4	18
7 OFI	12	5	3	4	16	13	+3	18
8 Ergotelis	13	4	3	6	14	14	-4	15
9 Panatolikos	11	4	2	5	10	18	-4	14
10 Panionios	13	3	4	6	12	16	-4	13
11 Asteras Tripolis	11	3	3	5	6	12	-6	12
12 PAS Giannina	11	2	4	5	12	16	-4	10
13 Aris	11	2	4	5	9	13	-4	10
14 Levadiakos	6	1	3	2	4	8	-4	6
15 Kerkyra	11	1	3	7	7	19	-12	6
16 Doxa Dramas	6	0	1	5	1	12	-11	1

SPAIN La Liga



	Last5games Most recent first							
	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1 Barcelona	16	11	4	1	50	8	+42	37
2 Real Madrid	15	12	1	2	50	13	+37	37
3 Valencia	15	9	3	3	24	16	+8	30
4 Levante	15	9	2	4	24	17	+7	29
5 Sevilla	15	6	6	3	16	11	+5	24
6 Málaga	15	7	3	5	20	20	+0	24
7 Osasuna	15	5	7	3	19	27	-8	22
8 Espanyol	15	6	2	7	15	19	-4	20
9 Athletic Club	15	4	7	4	21	18	+3	19
10 Atlético Madrid	15	5	4	6	23	25	-2	19
11 Mallorca	15	4	6	5	14	20	-6	18
12 Real Sociedad	15	4	4	7	16	23	-7	16
13 Getafe	15	4	4	7	15	22	-7	16
14 Real Betis	15	5	1	9	15	22	-7	16
15 Granada	15	4	4	7	8	15	-7	16
16 Rayo Vallecano	16	4	4	8	17	25	-8	16
17 Villarreal	15	3	6	6	12	21	-9	15
18 Sporting Gijón	15	4	3	8	15	25	-10	15
19 Racing Santander	15	2	7	6	11	21	-10	13
20 Real Zaragoza	15	2	4	9	12	29	-17	10

HOLLAND Eredivisie



	Last5games Most recent first							
	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1 AZ	16	12	2	2	35	13	+22	38
2 PSV	16	10	4	2	43	18	+25	34
3 Twente	16	9	6	1	41	15	+26	33
4 Ajax	16	8	6	2	42	23	+19	30
5 Heerenveen	16	7	7	2	38	23	+15	28
6 Feyenoord	16	8	4	4	31	20	+11	28
7 Vitesse	16	7	5	4	22	16	+6	26
8 Groningen	16	6	5	5	28	28	+0	23
9 ADO Den Haag	16	6	3	7	22	27	-5	21
10 Roda JC	16	7	0	9	22	38	-16	21
11 Heracles	16	5	5	6	27	24	+3	20
12 NAC Breda	16	5	3	8	22	27	-5	18
13 Utrecht	16	4	5	7	28	34	-6	17
14 RKC Waalwijk	16	4	3	9	14	27	-13	15
15 NEC	16	4	2	10	15	27	-12	14
16 De Graafschap	16	3	3	10	15	36	-21	12
17 VVV	16	2	4	10	16	40	-24	10
18 Excelsior	16	1	5	10	9	34	-25	8

LEAGUE ONE



	Last5games Most recent first							
	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1 Charlton Athletic	20	14	5	1	43	15	+28	47
2 Sheffield Wedn...	20	13	3	4	36	24	+12	42
3 Milton Keynes Dons	20	11	6	3	41	21	+20	39
4 Huddersfield Town	20	10	8	2	37	18	+19	38
5 Sheffield United	20	11	5	4	36	22	+14	38
6 Brentford	20	9	5	6	24	21	+3	32
7 Carlisle United	20	9	5	6	27	29	-2	32
8 Notts County	20	9	4	7	34	28	+6	31
9 Stevenage	20	7	8	5	24	18	+6	29
10 Preston North End	20	8	3	9	32	36	-4	27
11 Bury	20	8	3	9	26	31	-5	27
12 Colchester United	20	6	8	6	30	31	-1	26
13 Hartlepool United	20	7	5	8	25	28	-3	26
14 AFC Bournemouth	20	7	5	8	23	26	-3	26
15 Tranmere Rovers	20	7	5	8	20	23	-3	26
16 Oldham Athletic	20	7	5	8	27	31	-4	26
17 Leyton Orient	20	5	7	8	22	29	-7	22
18 Exeter City	20	5	5	10	20	33	-13	20
19 Yeovil Town	20	4	7	9	22	30	-8	19
20 Scunthorpe United	20	3	9	8	26	32	-6	18
21 Walsall	20	3	8	9	19	26	-7	17
22 Rochdale	20	4	5	11	22	38	-16	17
23 Wycombe Wanderers	20	4	4	12	23	34	-11	16
24 Chesterfield	20	3	4	13	25	40	-15	13

France Ligue 1



	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	Last5games <i>Most recent first</i>
1 Montpellier	17	11	3	3	36	18	+18	36	LWWWD
2 PSG	17	11	3	3	30	17	+13	36	WWLLD
3 Lille	17	9	7	1	29	15	+14	34	WW added
4 Olympique Lyon	17	10	2	5	29	19	+10	32	WWWLL
5 Stade Rennes	17	8	5	4	28	22	+6	29	DL added
6 Toulouse	17	8	5	4	19	16	+3	29	WL added
7 Saint-Étienne	17	7	6	4	21	19	+2	27	WD added
8 Olympique Mars...	17	6	7	4	22	16	+6	25	DWWLW
9 Lorient	17	6	5	6	17	19	-2	23	LWLWL
10 Bordeaux	17	4	8	5	19	21	-2	20	DWW added
11 Evian TG	17	4	7	6	22	25	-3	19	LWL added
12 Caen	17	5	4	8	23	27	-4	19	LL added
13 Auxerre	17	4	6	7	24	27	-3	18	WLLLW
14 Sochaux	17	4	6	7	21	31	-10	18	LD added
15 Dijon	17	5	3	9	17	31	-14	18	LDWWL
16 Brest	17	2	11	4	18	19	-1	17	DDLWL
17 Valenciennes	17	4	5	8	17	19	-2	17	WLL added
18 Nancy	17	3	6	8	14	22	-8	15	DLLWW
19 Nice	17	3	5	9	15	19	-4	14	LL added
20 Ajaccio	17	1	6	10	17	36	-19	9	DL added

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